

ly powerful to break down many of the details, will not be so violent as it is generally believed. The House stands committed to the principle; and is now only committed to examine the clauses in which the principle is embodied. It cannot, therefore, make any very important alteration without falling into a contradiction of its own act. The tory party are in a dilemma, and they feel it: they are well aware of the fruitlessness of opposing themselves to the unanimous demands of the country; and they know that any inconsistent movement now would forfeit that character for sagacity, which, through good and evil, they have acquired and maintained: they will, therefore, play their part with caution and skill. That they look forward to office, and depend much upon their own tact in defeating the bill by clipping its wings, we are well assured, not only through private channels of information, but by their indirect allusions in the late discussion. Lord Grey and his colleagues have, therefore, to contend not merely against prejudice, but faction; and if they do not observe the strictest integrity of purpose, the chances are that the tories will at all events succeed in bringing the Administration into contempt, which is the first object at which they aim. It should be remembered that the tory reform bill is ready, and that the least uncertainty or indecision manifested by the Ministry, may turn the balance of popularity, and give a false éclat to the Duke of Buckingham's deceitful project. We still trust, however, in Lord Grey; he has struggled so long in the toils, that he is entitled to confidence, until he has actually permitted his opportunities to pass away profitless.

BELL'S WEEKLY MESSENGER.

Never, since the existence of a legislature in this country, were so much anxiety and solicitude manifested as on Friday night during the whole course of the debate. Not only was the House of Lords crowded with its own members, but also the members of the Commons, and Palace-yard without was equally thronged with expecting multitudes. The scene was impressive, absorbing, and interesting beyond all description. Dispatches were waiting for Scotland, Ireland, and for all parts of the country. Horses, Carriages, &c. &c. During the debate, the hopes and fears of the respective parties were strongly marked in their countenances. People betted as in the St. Leger Race, when the horses are within five hundred yards of the winning post. At one time it was reported that the Opposition would clearly have the majority;—at another,—that such were the doubts of the Ministers that it was deemed expedient to postpone the debate. It still, however, proceeded and with more animation and anxiety as it reached its close. At half-past 6 o'clock on Saturday morning the clamours for "Divide" were incessant, when the galleries were cleared, and the division took place, and was pronounced by the Lord Chancellor, in a voice of exhaustion, but momentary triumph, to be—

| | | |
|--------------|---------|------|
| Non Contents | Present | 126 |
| | Proxies | 49 |
| | | —175 |
| Contents | Present | 128 |
| | Proxies | 56 |
| | | —184 |

Majority for the second reading—NINE.

Immediately after the division, some conversation took place between the Duke of Wellington and Earl Grey, when the latter consented to defer the committal of the Bill until after the Easter recess.

We may now, therefore, congratulate the country upon the triumphant success of the measure, upon which not only its peace and harmony—its moral temperament—its cheerful patriotic character—its sober and considerate enjoyment—its well-poised morals—and all its social comforts depended, but upon which also, we may honestly assert, its very political existence hung and rested. Hard fought, indeed, has been the battle, and most glorious has been the result; but a result like that of all other great victories,—to be enjoyed with temperance and thankfulness, and to be accompanied with a disposition, on both sides, to bury all angry matters of controversy in oblivion.

Our readers will perceive that we consider the victory obtained upon the second reading as the effective carrying of the Bill, and so in substance it is, and as such, the Duke of Wellington admitted it would be. It is an acknowledgment of its principle, and a confession, even on the part of many of its opponents, that, however objectionable some of its details may be, the policy of the measure is recognized, and pronounced as unanswerably just. Lord Grey may now consider himself as having obtained the highest pinnacle of greatness as a minister of state, and of having matured and carried into effect a measure, for which he must receive the gratitude of the latest posterity, mixed with the blessings of those who are happily enabled to participate in his triumph, and cheer him with their living voices. We shall not perplex ourselves and our readers

with the details of this Bill, and its possible alterations in the Committee. Its hardest opponents will find that they bite against steel;—they may nibble, but they cannot wound; they may bruise, but cannot break. But upon this point we refer to our political article in the second page.

Having secured this great measure,—this new Magna Charta of our rights, we may consider ourselves as starting upon a fresh race of national glory and political existence. But let us be satisfied with the Constitution of England, as it will be fixed by this Bill; and neither be allured by the restless frenzies of contemplative speculators, or the actively suggested mischiefs of those who stand out for a larger portion of popular right than is consistent with security. For Heaven's sake, let us now have peace and quiet, and not be always at sea, like the fabled island of Delos, seeking for a new foundation amidst tempests and waves.—April 16.

LONDON MORNING CHRONICLE.

We published yesterday Ridgway's list of the majority and minority on the second reading of the English Reform Bill in the House of Lords, on the memorable division of last week. This red and black record of the friends and foes of the liberties of the people, ought to be hung up in the house of every reformer throughout the kingdom. An analysis of the component parts of the minority, remarkably displays the effects of the long predominance of the tory politics. Twenty Lord Lieutenants of Counties, 31 Pensioners, and 84 borough proprietors, voted against the Government and Reform. Such is the political and sinister interests arrayed against any effective amendment of the representation. The spiritual peers somewhat redeemed their character and their reputation with the nation; the majority comprised 12 bishops, the minority 15 prelates; and 3 of 'the right reverend fathers in God,' viz: Ely, Hereford, and Peterborough, did not appear in person or by proxy. In the committee, therefore, parties being so evenly balanced, the bishops—if the 15 spiritual anti-reformers stand to their text—will give the casting votes against the main clauses of the bill. Should this result follow, the enemies of the Church will rejoice inwardly to view the heads of the church thus commit a deliberate act of suicide; but we counsel the bishops to mark the 'signs of the times;' to ponder well the peril of such their hostile position against the million laity, and to observe the fortunate effect on the public mind, of the recent spiritual conversions to the public cause. If the 15 spiritual peers Canterbury, Armagh, Bangor, Bristol, Carlisle, Exeter, Gloucester, Kilmore, Oxford, Rochester, Clogher, Durham, Salisbury, St. Asaph, and Winchester—continue their fanatic non-conversion, they will effectually alienate the hearts of the people from the Church Establishment, and infallibly work the downfall of the hierarchy. We do not appeal to the Philpott genius, to those who, as they foolishly opine, are worshipping the rising sun—but we do earnestly beseech the prejudiced and near sighted prelates to pause in their insane career. Their former banishment from the House of Lords, in the days of the Commonwealth, as held out to them as a scare-crow by the wily boroughmongers, who thus lamentably succeed in misleading the blind and erring prelates. We call upon them to view the primary causes of that memorable 'weeding of the House of Lords.' Was it not the bigoted and persecuting conduct of the Stewart bishops—was it not their contumacy towards the people which led to their banishment from all temporal power in the state? They were the ever ready and active tools of persecution and corruption. Ignorant of the world, except in the means of personal advancement and temporal ambition—they rushed on their destruction, though forewarned by all the enlightened political men of the 17th century of the inevitable consequences: too late they discovered the errors of their ways, and fain would they have retraced their steps, when the precipice stared them in the face: the anti-reform bishops are treading in the shoes of their Stuart predecessors. May they be saved say we sincerely, from the brink of political perdition; may they persevere, pray their enemies, who joyfully behold them working the destruction of the hierarchy: the bishops, we ardently hope, will see the light, and resist the stale baits thrown out to them by that wily but superannuated politician, Lord Eldon (who is no longer the sole patrons of the 'Livings' of the church) and with an enlightened foresight of the spirit of the times, may they cease to oppose reform, if they cannot be induced to support it. We know that the eyes of the country are upon them; their conduct is unseemly and ungrateful to the people; they are blindly undermining the establishment, and swelling the ranks of the sectarists. These observations we make in the spirit of charity, and we have never been suspected of any affected love for the right reverend bench. April 25.

FROM THE ABERDEEN CHRONICLE.

It will be observed that both Houses have adjourned to Monday, 7th May; and in the meantime all sorts of speculations are

afloat respecting the ultimate fate of the Reform bill—that much agitated measure, which has kept the country in confusion and doubt for nearly a twelvemonth. Without attending, however, to the idle and sinister rumours of party, it is quite clear that there is some obstacle to the creation of additional peers, either in the opposition of the king, or of some influential members of the cabinet, or in the scruples of Earl Grey. We have been always told that it would take place—that the king was determined—that he was a zealous reformer, &c. But the fact is, that though the creation of additional peers is now plainly necessary for the success of the Reform Bill, it has not taken place. No creation has been made—and the political game is in doubt. How is it possible, we would ask, to carry the Reform Bill unopposed through the committee of the peers, in the face of the positive declaration by several who voted for the second reading that they would propose material alterations in the committee. We are totally at a loss to unravel this mystery; and with every confidence in Earl Grey, in his unshaken firmness and integrity, we still tremble for the fate of the bill. But on this subject it is needless to speculate further, for we have really no data on which to build even a conjecture.

The Duke of Wellington's protest against the bill, which we inserted in our list, has been numerous signed by the anti-reform peers. This protest is a miserable tissue of exclusive reasoning. It is one continual begging of the question. It proves nothing, but asserts every thing, and by this easy process of assuming all that he ought to prove, his Grace no doubt makes out his damaged article, which has been artfully cobbled up for sale, and can only impose on customers who buy without examining. The moment it is looked at it appears full of cracks, and is thrown aside as unfit for use. He sets out with a most wonderful discovery, namely, that the Government of Great Britain is a monarchy, and that no change can be useful which strikes out the principles of monarchy, and would prevent the sovereign from performing the high duties allotted him; which would leave him without the free and independent exercise of his lawful prerogatives, in guarding the general interests of the state, in upholding its ancient institutions. Now, if this sentence be fairly analysed, it appears to be really nothing but silly and unmeaning verbiage. First, it is denied, and certainly not proved by the Noble Duke, that the bill trenches on the prerogatives of the King; and 2dly, We never heard that it was the King's business to guard the general interests of the state. We never looked to him for any such superintendence. It is not at all from this quarter that the subject can ever derive any security for his general interests. On the contrary, a jealousy of the crown is a great principle in our constitution. It is from the Crown that any attack on the general interests of the state has been always dreaded; and in point of fact the danger has always proceeded from this source. The prerogatives of the Crown and the liberty of the subject, or the general interests of the state, have always been at variance; and it is an entirely novel idea, quite worthy of his Grace of Wellington, that the subject could in any case be injured by a measure that trenches on the prerogatives of the Crown. But we do not see that by giving the people the power of choosing their own representatives, we in the smallest degree touch these prerogatives. Great dangers are expected to arise from the measure, because it is said to be untried. But we say it is not untried. A government by means of a representative body elected by the people is not untried. We have in many cases experienced the greatest benefits from the influence of the people on the deliberations of Parliament, as we have experienced much evil from the corrupt influence of the buyers and sellers of seats in Parliament. We have fully experienced the good and evil of both systems, and in removing the corrupt influence, and strengthening the purer influence of the people, we are not running into any untried experiments. Any one might as well say to his neighbour who proposes to build a house, and had collected all the stones for the purpose, 'Sir, you are trying a very dangerous experiment;—you don't know how these stones will hold together,—it is very dangerous, Sir, very dangerous.' Are we not building our new political edifice of the very same materials out of which it has been constructed from time immemorial? Are we not proceeding on the known and tried principle of representation—and how then can it be said that we are embarking in any reckless scheme of untried innovation?

The old cry about chartered rights and vested interests is again raised in opposition to this bill. The bill, we are told, attacks the sacredness of chartered rights; 'the most ancient charters, and the most valued interest, it is added are treated with a reckless indifference which shocks every feeling of justice.' This is really a heavy charge. The rights of man are indeed sacred; and, when they are still further secured by charters, they are even more sacred. But the protest does not specify the nature of these sacred rights and valued interests which are attacked by the bill. The only right of which this bill takes cognizance is that of voting for members of Parliament; and so far from taking away this right, it greatly extends it to thousands who never had it before. It takes away this right from those who prostituted it to the most corrupt ends—who sold it for money—who sent to Parliament, not the member who was most worthy, but him who paid the most. The Bill puts an end to this base traffic of seats in Parliament, and to all the immorality, corruption and perjury, to which it gave rise. Are these the sacred chartered rights and the valued interest to which the protest alludes? Is it our seat-selling that his Grace makes so pathetic a lamentation for? Does he regret that bribery and political villainy of every description should be put an end to? Does he really imagine, and can he take such liberties with the King's English, as to speak of a right to do wrong—a right to bribe—a right to perjure—a right to sell to the highest bidder the dearest constitutional privilege? Can he really prostitute the word sacred, by applying it to bribery and falsehood? And because there were men who received the wages of such iniquities, does he really affirm that a law which abolishes these iniquities, and takes away, of course, from those who profited by them their ill-gotten gains—does he, we repeat, affirm that such a law trenches on any sacred right, or shocks (that is his remarkable word) any feeling of justice? The feelings which are shocked must be the worst of our nature, those which sympathize with venality, injustice, and political wrongs of the deepest dye. And again, if we turn to Scotland, where are the sacred rights which are injured by this bill? The exclusive right of voting to be sure is taken away from several town councils who engrossed it from the great mass of the people, it is taken from the few, and it is given to the many, along with whom these few may vote. Is