

Our line advanced, and, unchecked by the enemy's fire, drove them rapidly out of the village of Ferrozshah and their encampment; then, changing front to its left, on its centre, our force continued to sweep the camp, bearing down all opposition, and continued to drive the enemy from their whole position. The line then halted, as if on a day of manoeuvre, receiving its two leaders as they rode along its front with a gratifying cheer, and displaying the captured standards of the Khaha army. We had taken upwards of 73 pieces of cannon, and were masters of the whole field.

The force assumed a position on the ground which it had won, but even here its labors were not to cease. In the course of two hours, Sirdar Sej Sing, who had commanded in the great last battle brought up from the vicinity of Ferrozpore fresh battalions, and a large field of artillery, supported by 80,000 Ghorepurras, hitherto encamped near the river. He drove in our cavalry parties, and made strenuous efforts to regain the position at Ferrozshah; this attempt was defeated; but its failure had scarcely become manifest, when the Sirdar renewed the contest with more troops and a larger artillery. He commenced by a combination against our left flank: and when this was frustrated made such a demonstration against the captured village as compelled us to change our whole front to the right. His guns during this manoeuvre, maintained an incessant fire, whilst our artillery ammunition being completely expended in these protracted combats we were unable to answer him with a single shot.

I now directed our almost exhausted cavalry to threaten both flanks at once, preparing the infantry to advance in support, which apparently caused him suddenly to cease his fire, and to abandon the field.

For twenty-four hours not a Sikh has appeared in our front. The remains of the Khalsa army are said to be in full retreat across the Sutlej, at Nuggurputhur and Teila, or marching up its left bank towards Hureekputhur, in the greatest confusion and dismay. Of their chiefs, Bahadur Sidh is killed; Lal Singh said to be wounded; Mehtab Singh, Abjoodhia Pershad, and Tej Singh, the late governor of Peshawar, have fled with precipitation. Their camp is the scene of the most awful carnage, and they have abandoned large stores of grain, camp equipage, and ammunition.

Thus has apparently terminated this unprovoked and criminal invasion of the peaceful provinces under British protection.

On the conclusion of such a narrative as I have given, it is surely superfluous in me to say I am, and shall be to the last moment of my existence, proud of the army which I had the honour to command on the 21st and 22nd instant. To their gallant exertions I owe the satisfaction of seeing such a victory achieved, and the glory of having my own name associated with it.

The loss of this army has been heavy; how could a hope be formed that it should be otherwise? Within thirty hours this force stormed an entrenched camp, fought a general action, and sustained two considerable combats with the enemy. Within four days it has dislodged from their positions, on the left bank of the Sutlej, 60,000 Sikh soldiers, supported by upwards of 150 pieces of cannon, 108 of which the enemy acknowledge to have lost, and 91 of which are in our possession.

In addition to our losses in the battle, the captured camp was found to be everywhere protected by charged mines, by the successive springing of which many brave officers and men have been destroyed.

I must bear testimony to the valour displayed in these actions by the whole of the regiments of her Majesty's service employed, and the East India Company's 1st European Light Infantry; the native force seconded in a most spirited manner their gallant conduct.

To Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Hardinge, my second in command, my warmest thanks are due, not only for his personal exertions, which were conspicuous to all, but for the able assistance he afforded me through all the eventual scenes of this well fought action. To the general and my personal staff, I feel deeply indebted for their unceasing exertions. Major Generals Sir Harry Smith, Gilbert, and Sir John Littler, and Brigadier Wallace (who nobly fell in the hour of victory), fully realised the high expectations I had formed of their conduct as leaders of divisions.

With the Brigadiers, the commandant of artillery, and the chief engineer, the commanding officers of regiments, and with departmental staff, I was also greatly pleased; their exertions were most unremitting, and highly praiseworthy.

The reports I have received from the generals of divisions of infantry, the brigadiers of cavalry, and the commandant of artillery, speak in the highest terms of their respective staff; and it is my intention as soon as possible, to forward to you, right honourable sir, a list containing the names of all the officers I have just enumerated, together with the names of all those who appear to me specially to merit approbation and favour.

The hurried manner in which I am forced to collect information, and prepare these numerous details, may, I fear, cause the omission of the names of some officers well deserving of notice; but I shall not fail to send in a supplementary list when I can assure myself of their individual merits, as it would be most painful to me to feel that I had not done justice to any one of the brave men who shared with me the glories and dangers of this arduous conflict.

I beg now to mention the conduct of an illustrious nobleman, Count Ravensburgh, who, with the officers of his suite, Counts Greuben

and Oriola, did us the honour to accompany the force during our operations. They were present at Moodkee, and in this great battle. It is with my greatest pleasure and sincerity I can bear my testimony to their gallant conduct on these occasions, worthy of the high reputation in the arms of their countrymen, and of the great ancestor of one of them. I lament to add that Dr. Hoffmeister, the medical attendant on the count, was killed in the action on the 21st instant.

I herewith enclose the report of Lieutenant-General the Right Hon. Sir H. Hardinge, second in command.—I have the honour to be, H. GOUGH, General, Commander-in-Chief.

From Willmer and Smith's European Times, March 4.

#### ENGLAND'S COMMERCIAL POLICY.

The agitation which is now proceeding in favour of Free-trade is almost exclusively confined to the walls of Parliament. The people out of doors—the great mass of this thinking, intelligent, stirring nation, require no fillip, want no incentive to wed them to the cause. Their love is deep and abiding. They are passive, but not indifferent spectators of the conflict. It is the nation *versus* the lords of the soil; justice and expediency on the one side—obstinacy and selfishness on the other. We have alluded below to the monster debate, and its all but monster majority—a majority too potent for the landlords to struggle against. The safety of the measure is insured; and our transatlantic readers, engaged in commerce with England, may rest satisfied that Peel's commercial policy will become the law of the land. There will be wrangling, there will be delay, but there will not, cannot be defeat. The events of the last few days show that the House of Lords will swallow the pill; with wry faces, it may be, like children taking medicine, but they will gulp it down, from a conviction of its necessity—combined, probably, with a conviction equally strong, that they will be made to do so should they turn restive.

Some fears have been expressed that Lord Stanley would lead the Protectionist forlorn hope in the House of Peers. He is a wayward, imprudent man, with strong nerves, a good deal of showy talent, and very little judgment. But it is understood that even *he* quails. Cobden's speech in the House, on the night of the division, was devoted less to a consideration of the question, on its abstract merits, than to an investigation of the pitiful desperate condition of the obstructives. He clearly showed that an appeal of the country would only procrastinate and embitter the fight, without settling it. He proved that all the great towns in the nation—the seats of trade, commerce, capital, manufactures, and *mind*, were supporters of the Government policy; and that the landlords must depend upon their rotten boroughs and nomination counties alone for support. All laws which mar the onward progress of the age are transitory. The peers know this. In the present spirit of the times, the defects in the representation, should they take shelter behind them, would be the commencement of an agitation which would not leave a vestige remaining. As Cobden demonstrated, there is a sufficient amount of public opinion at present, in favour of Free-trade, to change, if necessary, the very succession to the Crown itself.

Still, it is doubtful whether the repeal of the Corn-laws will be immediate. On Monday night, Mr Villiers moved, in committee, for the immediate repeal of the duties on corn, instead of the repeal three years hence, enforcing his position cleverly by proof, that the present time was the best adapted for the interest of the agriculturist; that now he could better compete with his foreign rival, when wheat was scarce and dear in all parts of the world instead of three years hence, when it might possibly be cheap and plentiful. The debate stood adjourned until the following night and at the time we write—on the evening of Tuesday—we are unacquainted with the result. It is just possible, if the morning papers are expressed to Liverpool to-day, that the division may arrive here an hour or two before the sailing of the packet, and thus cross the Atlantic with the European Times; but we are not ubiquitous, and in the absence of advices from our London representative at this late hour, we are in the dark as to the result. In all probability, however, the sense of the House will be against Mr Villiers, as Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel think that it is impolitic on the score of success to depart from the scheme as originally propounded. The minister would be delighted to be left in a minority, but the landlords, there is every reason to apprehend, making the best of what they consider a bad bargain, will hold him to

three years term, and divide with him against the immediate repealers. All depends upon the landlords, for the Free-traders in the House are not numerically strong enough to beat the Ministerialists, the Whigs, and the Protectionists. But nothing in their previous tactics can lead us to hope that the latter will exercise a generous and dignified liberality on this occasion.

The division on Saturday presents some curious results. The House, as our readers are probably aware, consists of 656 members; of these, 227 Liberals voted with the Minister, and 112 Tories—total 339; against him, 11 Liberals, and 231 Tories—total 242, which makes the Majority of 97. There were 30 Liberals absent, and 15 Tories; 5 vacancies, and the Speaker, 6; making up the full complement of the House—656. Sir Robert Peel's supporters, it will thus be seen, only number about a sixth of the representation, and in this estimate are included 27 officials. It is clear, then, that without the aid of the Liberals he would have been *hors de combat*; in other words, he would have been destroyed by those who made him.

#### THE MONSTER DEBATE.

The great debate on Sir Robert Peel's financial scheme, which extended over three weeks, and afforded food for twelve nights' incessant oratory, was brought to a close on the morning of Saturday last, by a division which gave the Minister a majority of NINETY-SEVEN! The eye of the hawk never followed its prey with greater intensity than the public, out of doors, have turned to these debates in Parliament. Not that the speeches themselves were cared for; they literally became a bore. But day after day people looked for the result down the endless columns of the daily prints in vain, until the interest deepened into anxiety, followed, as the dreary monotony of words proceeded, by absolute despair.

Nor was this despair unnatural when it is considered how mighty are the interests now trembling in the balance—how great has been the expenditure of time and talk—and how far the result is from being yet consummated. Every merchant, every tradesman, every one in business, in short, experiences the painful, in some instances, the ruinous results, of this state of transition. Parliament has been sitting more than a month, and nothing has been done—absolutely nothing, for we are as yet only entering on the threshold of the investigation. The debate which closed on Saturday is the first skirmish—the precursor of the general engagement. The House, by this majority, has only pledged itself to go into committee. All the multifarious parts of the scheme have yet to be discussed, and affirmed or rejected before it reaches the House of Lords; there, the same time-consuming process is to be repeated, and probably the spring may be far advanced, or we may have got into the summer solstice, ere legislative adjudication be complete. What a prospect in the interim for the trade of the country—for that trade which, irrespective of consequences, must still go on, however deranged, as its stoppage, like that of the functions of the animal body, would involve the very extinction of vitality itself!

But, as we intimated in our last publication, Sir Robert Peel has determined to proceed with the Corn-law part of his scheme first. This scheme, our readers know, proposes the extinction of the Corn-laws in three years from the present time; and the next great battle, as well as the next, "solemn talk," will have reference to the immediate or the postponed repeal. Sir Robert, since the first announcement of his plan, has stolen, in this respect, by his tactics, a march on the enemy. The three years' grace was debateable ground; a great difference of opinion existed about its merits, and many of those who opposed the scheme altogether, expressed a preference for an instant instead of a postponed repeal. Feeling, that if he blindly adhered to his own pet scheme, a junction might be formed between those favourable to the immediate abolition of the Corn-laws, and those altogether opposed to any change in the present system, which might end in his defeat, and drive him from office, he has wisely and cleverly prevented such a result by anticipating it; and he will now, he says, consent to whatever the House sanctions—whether it be in favour of his own or any other plan as respects the time for the law taking effect. When this knot-point is decided, public attention will be transferred, as respects the future, to the hereditary branch of the Legislature. Until that time comes, it is folly to speculate as to whether the "county party,"

in other words, the landlords, will coalesce with the League, to force the speedy, instead of the more protracted, extinction of the law.

But the fate of the measure in the Lords is pregnant with consequences of the highest, the most commanding interest. The measure is safe in the Commons—that is undeniable; is it so in the Lords? Will the Peers, with a majority in the Commons of 97, and in the present state of excited public feeling, throw out the measure, and thus force on a dissolution of Parliament? Our firm belief is that the Peers will pass the bill; and in this opinion we are strengthened by the private testimony of several influential members of Parliament, with whose views we have been favoured. A dissolution of Parliament at the present time would be an astounding national calamity. Matters in Ireland look serious and every day is making them worse. Disease is already doing the work of death; and if Sir Robert Peel's frightful anticipations of the future prove correct, that unhappy country is destined to become a huge charnel-house. No serious evil can affect Ireland without being felt in England. The physical condition of the sister country is at all times a matter of the first importance—at the present time it is painfully so. But without looking at all across the channel, there is sufficient anxiety at home to make legislative delay a matter of fear and trembling. Such a result would involve the suspension of the great railway schemes which are now before Parliament; it would do more, it would involve the derangement of the currency. The money which has been paid into the national exchequer on account of the requirements of Parliament is still in safe keeping. How could it be disposed of with safety to the public requirements on the one hand, and to the currency of the country on the other? The money market is at present sufficiently nay, deplorably tight, owing to some fifteen millions being thus packed up. Is the "tightness" to continue during the turmoil of a general election, or can "relaxation" be safely indulged without evils hardly less gigantic? But setting aside the question of the currency and a deficiency of food, how is the foreign trade of the country to fare during such a tedious and ruinous interregnum? Are the passions of the people, inflamed to the highest point in what is to them a question of life and death, to be further sharpened by short employment as well as short commons? Will the aristocracy go to the hastings on this question with the certain conviction that the voice of the country is against them—that its capital, its intellect, its numbers its energies are all against them? No. The Lords are prudent men; they own broad acres, they possess splendid mansions, they run costly carriages they hire pliant lacquies—and they desire to retain their luxuries and their privileges. They will not risk them by running their heads against a wall to the imminent danger of whatever brains they possess, and the total forfeiture of that respect, without which rank, and station, and lineage, are but the cobwebs of a bygone age.

In the monster debate to which we have referred, there were many soporific and a few brilliant speeches. Amongst the latter, and, indeed, at the head of them, may be placed Sir Robert Peel's. Old and practised an orator as he is—educated amongst a galaxy of great men—the contemporary, youthful though he was at the time, of the gifted spirits, who threw a halo round the close of the last, and the first quarter of the present, century—he was never known to be so sound in argument, so pointed in satire, so overwhelmingly crushing by his facts, figures, and deductions, as on this memorable occasion. Taken in all its bearings, the speech will stand the test of comparison with the most successful efforts of oratory in ancient or modern times. It was the speech of his life; he has never excelled, and never can surpass it. This great effort, which will be found at considerable length in our columns, must have had its effect in swelling the majority to ninety-seven; it must surely have proved an exception to the remark which was once made by a Scotch member—"I have heard many a speech which changed my opinion, but I never heard one which changed my vote!"

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert will, it is said after her accouchement, visit France. The Duke and Duchesse of Nemours are to repair to London to accompany them.

Free Trade principles are becoming popular in France.

[For further extracts from British papers, see page 198.]