

fective. Mix some unslacked lime with corn-meal, and place where the rats may accidentally find it. They will soon become very thirsty, and upon drinking water the lime slacks and swells the rat like "all natur." In the Bahama Isles sponge is fried and placed in their way; they eat, drink, swell, burst and die. If they die in their nests or any concealed place vast quantities of Cologne will be required. Lime and meal should be, of the first, one part, and meal two parts, well mixed together."

European News.

From British papers to the 4th April, received by the steamer Caledonia.

From Willmer and Smith's European Times of April 4.

THE BRITISH TARIFF.

Since we last addressed our readers, the "great and comprehensive measure" of Sir Robert Peel has passed through another stage in its progress towards its legislative finale. The second reading, after a week's debate, was carried by a majority of 88, which is a diminution of 9, as compared with the first great parliamentary division that followed its introduction into the House of Commons. Considering the lock-jaw under which commerce of every description is now suffering, the progress of the measure by no means keeps pace with the impatience of the people. Parliament met on the 22nd of January, and the beginning of April finds that the tariff has only advanced to the second reading. It is now uncertain whether the subsequent stages can be so accelerated as to launch the bill into the House of Lords before Parliament adjourns for the Easter holidays. Delays are proverbially dangerous, and every day renders the situation of the government more embarrassed and critical. It hangs together by the forbearance of its opponents. All party ties are uprooted and cast to the winds; and no foresight on the part of the minister can guard against a *contrectemps* which may bring his career to a premature end. The spite of the Protectionists is hardly mitigated; and, as the course of politics sometimes runs smooth, an amalgamation can be readily brought about, where the object is to break up the government, between parties who possess not a principle nor a sentiment in common. The quondam friends of Sir Robert Peel tell him candidly, *vis-a-vis*, that he is falling—that his days are numbered, but he blunts the sneer by referring to the noble cause in which he will fall—the cause of liberating the industry and commerce of the country from the swaddling clothes of Protection, under which it has been well nigh smothered.

The object of the obstructives appears to be to gain time, but how they can profit thereby it would puzzle a conjurer to tell. In the meantime some of the great trading emporiums, writhing under the losses which entail on them by the delay and uncertainty of the interregnum, have petitioned Parliament to pass the bill. All the great manufacturers in Manchester, all the principal merchants in Liverpool, have forwarded, irrespective of party, the expression of their views to the Premier in favour of his measure; which he duly laid before the House. It is painful to witness the effects of the present stagnation; and painful as they are, the aggregate misery would be less if the vista which overshadows the future could be penetrated.

What the Lords will do is still a puzzle to many, and a fruitful topic of speculation with all. The peers have lately had a meeting to consider their position and to chalk out their plan of operations when the new commercial scheme reaches their hereditary house. This meeting was numerously attended, and a strong opposition to the government measure was organized. But nothing has occurred to alter the opinion we have more than once expressed, that the Peers will pass the bill—if it reach them! It has not yet gone through the lower house, where at present it is really in great jeopardy, not arising from its own abstract merits or otherwise, so much as from the critical position of the ministry in reference to other measures, and to their old supporters.

Lord Stanley in presenting a petition the other night in favour of protection, expressed a wish that the ministerial scheme might be rejected; but as a set-off against his spleen, his father, the Earl of Derby, although stricken in years and labouring under disease, has determined, it is said, to leave his quiet quarters at Knowsley, in order to be present in the House of Lords when the bill goes into committee. The proxies of peers,

our readers are probably aware, avail not in committee; and the head of the house of Derby braves disquietude and the sacrifice of many personal conveniences, in the evening of life, to support a measure which his heir repudiates, and in disgust with which he left the ministry.

The truth is, that the old and wealthy and unencumbered portion of the aristocracy are the decided friends of Free-trade and increased commerce. But the needy and insolvent portion,—the young sprigs whose mansions are mortgaged to the tiles, who cannot ride over the transition state,—these are the noisy and not very discreet opponents of Sir Robert Peel. The remark is not personally applicable to Lord Stanley, but is to many of his aristocratic contemporaries, whose spirit he has imbibed, and whose prejudices he defends.

The speech of Sir Robert Peel, in closing the debate on the second reading, was another of those elaborate, well-reasoned arguments, pregnant with mind and matter, which the Premier, on great occasions, is in the habit of giving to the world. The liberality of its tone and the large political and economic truths which it evolved, have increased the chasm between him and the Tory party. But some doubt had been thrown on his sincerity by his consenting to the delay which the introduction of the Irish Coercion Bill will necessarily occasion. Sir Robert denies the imputation, and avers that his opinions have undergone no change; that he is sincerely anxious to push his tariff, and more particularly the Corn-law portion of it, forward without delay; but that courtesy to the declared voice of the House of Lords, where the Coercion Bill originated, demands that that measure should be considered; above all, that the insecurity for life and property in Ireland imperatively calls for the intervention of Parliament. A spirited debate, followed by a division, took place as to whether the Coercion Bill should precede the Corn Bill, and a majority of 33 affirmed that it should. The tactics of the Government on this point, and the delay to which the tariff is now exposed, have given much uneasiness to the more earnest Free-traders. It is observed, too, that although the hostility of the Protectionists towards the free-trade policy of the Government is as fierce as ever, yet that a marked change has come over the spirit of their dreams towards the *personnel* of the Government; and it has been hinted that a compromise has been the result, unfavourable to the people, and injurious to the efficacy of the tariff.

Now, it is difficult to conceive what the Government has to gain by such subserviency. Peel is pledged to stand or fall by his fiscal scheme. Unless the primary features of the bantling are so mangled that its parent would scarcely be able to recognise his own offspring, the wishes of the Protectionists will not be satisfied, nor their hostility mitigated. To abandon one party and betray another—charges to which these insinuations unmistakably point—involves a want of principle, a love of mischief, on the part of Sir Robert Peel, which we are unwilling in the absence of all evidence, to attribute to him.

Undeniably, great uneasiness, and what is worse, great misery, accompany the present transition state. Trade, through all its branches and ramifications, is keenly susceptible of the present prostration. The Premier appears to have his heart in his work; and we confess we see no reason to question his sincerity. All great changes, all vast ameliorations, must be purchased by some individual suffering; but Sir Robert Peel cannot fairly be held answerable for evils which he has been doing his best not only to mitigate but entirely to extinguish.

PARLIAMENTARY.

English politics centre, at the present moment, in two measures—the English Tariff and the Irish Coercion Bill; the bane and antidote of the Government. The latter measure is being fiercely assailed; and, in truth, with much force, by the opposition; for it proceeds upon a principle repugnant to every principle of civil liberty—that of punishing the innocent with the guilty. There are, according to Sir James Graham, five counties in Ireland where murders and assassinations are rife—where life, either at night or at mid-day, seems to be estimated at a pin's fee: These five counties are either parallel with, or contiguous to, the great Irish stream, the Shannon; and are exclusively agricultural. It makes one's blood run cold to read, in the Irish papers, the deliberate system of shooting and assassination of which these disturbed districts are the scenes; and if the Coercion Bill would put an end to a system which wars with every feeling of

humanity, the evil would be submitted to for the good it would produce. But the cause of these outrages lies too deep for an act of Parliament to reach. Assassins who brave the gallows pay no attention to the contents of a piece of parchment; it will not arrest the murderer's aim; it will not infuse the milk of human kindness into the bosom of a famishing wretch.

To reach the evil, to arrest the cause, the peasant's pot ought to be made to boil with a substantial meal; his condition in the scale of animal nature ought to be raised by a parental government. By tenants-at-will are treated by too many of their landlords in the sister kingdom as though they were mere beasts of prey, to be hunted to death at the caprice of the owners of the soil. The same post which brings us the details of a brutal assassination, is accompanied by an account of the wholesale eviction of tenantry from an estate on which they have existed since they saw the light, and to which they cling with all the fondness of early hopes and feelings. They are turned loose upon the world, friendless, penniless, with starvation staring them in the face, without a house to receive or a roof to cover them. We abhor the assassin, we execrate his crimes; but surely not less deserving of execration is the conduct of his superior in rank and station, whose narrow-souled cupidity encourages, nay generates the moral cancer at which we lift up our hands in pious horror.

The Irish Coercion Bill will be stoutly opposed by the bulk of the Irish and a large portion of the English Liberals in Parliament. An angry debate took place on the evening of Tuesday, when this measure came before the House, and a narrow majority of 35 in a tolerably full house, affirmed that it should take precedence of the tariff. Our columns are so full of other matter, that we have space to pursue the subject further; but, as we before said, the interest of the parliamentary debates since our last is divided between the measure for feeding and that for dragging the Irish people.

COMMERCIAL.

The commercial accounts from all parts of the country are desponding and gloomy. With the solitary exception of Iron trade, in which great activity prevails, owing to temporary causes, there is not a branch of manufacturing industry which is not suffering more or less under paralysis.

In many of the manufacturing towns there are thousands of workmen out of employment; the markets for all descriptions of Produce are in a state of stagnation; stocks are daily on the increase, with sinking prices and a diminishing consumption; and, in short, a condition of things exist which threatens to suspend all the ordinary functions of commercial and manufacturing industry.

It is hardly necessary to state that this depression, which every week renders more galling and ruinous, has its primary origin in the uncertainty which still hangs about the fate of the tariff. Other causes, undoubtedly, contribute to fetter the wheels of trade, but the great impediment is the one at which we have glanced: A panic appears to be impending. The despondency is daily on the increase; and many persons in business, influenced probably by their fears, labour under the impression that the measure will yet be strangled in one or the other House of Parliament. So potent is this prestige of evil, that Sir Robert Peel, on the evening of Wednesday last, felt bound to renew the assurance of his desire to carry out his commercial policy with the least possible delay. We have alluded more in detail to the subject in another column, and we notice it here for the purpose of indicating what we sincerely believe to be a groundless apprehension, and to point out, at the same time, its blighting effect on every description of business.

In order to give as much freedom as possible to the operations of the commercial world, under existing circumstances, Ministers, as most of our readers know, issued recently a Treasury order for the payment of the reduced duties, the parties giving a bond that if the Peers threw out the bill the old scale of duties would be paid. This was a wise and a liberal move in the right direction, and advantage to some extent has been taken of it. But the risk involved has been too great to allow its general adoption. The public have derived little or no benefit from the arrangement; for the inducement to increased consumption has been neutralized by the retail price of the various articles being little below their former level. Indeed, all such temporary expedients partake of the character of gambling

—speculation it, perhaps, a more legitimate phrase. For the risk encountered the profits must be correspondingly heavy.

The gloom which hangs over business has been gradually deepening during the last six weeks—the last fortnight being the darkest of all. Under the most favourable circumstance there seems little chance of seeing the new tariff on the statute book before the end of May; and it will be at least the middle of that month before the critical stage—the second reading—can have passed the upper branch of the Legislature. If, unhappily, should the measure be thrown out, the summer will be consumed in the turmoil of a general election, and autumn will hardly see the new Parliament assembled. Then the war of words will recommence, embittered by disappointed hopes and individual suffering; and even supposing the Free traders to have a majority, their policy cannot come into play before the end of the present or the commencement of the following year. But, if, on the contrary, a Protectionist ministry is formed, and attempts to govern the country, the battle will be still further prolonged, and the intensity of commercial and national suffering fearfully increased. While we hope for the best, it is just as well to glance at the dark—at the worst side of the picture; and his must indeed be a bold heart that can, without shuddering at the temerity, be a party to convulsing this great commercial nation by a struggle so intense, that all the elements of society would stand a chance of being reduced to their chaotic condition. The stoutest heart may stand appalled, when it contemplates the consequences which must inevitably result from the rejection of a policy, to which every man in the kingdom who has the least pretensions to the character of a practical statesman, is irrevocably wedded; a policy which is opposed solely by the heavy country squires; by a sporting lord or two, whose knowledge of arithmetic is confined to "making a book" at Newmarket and Epsom; and by a flashy orator, clever at rounding a period, and manufacturing excitable works of fiction, whose creamy enthusiasm scorns all approach to the practical.

At Leeds, on Tuesday, the protracted stagnation caused prices to give way; but in that town, as well as in Huddersfield, the trade, at present, is principally supported by orders from America. At the last Manchester market there was little doing, and a feeling of gloom prevailed during the day, influenced by the hostile movements of the minority in the House of Commons to the Free-trade measures of the Government.

The Cotton market, more especially, is labouring under the effects of the general depression. The estimates of the new crop are now reduced to two millions of bales; and yet, in the face of this falling off in the staple, the price continues so low, that the rates which rule in this market involve a loss of not less than twenty shillings per bale, on a comparison with the prices which prevail in America! The statistics of the trade show a gradual decline on the sales since the measures of the Government were announced, and trade will certainly not recover its tone until all doubt has disappeared. Capital, like the sensitive plant, shrinks from contact while uncertainty is abroad; and the holders, as well as the importers, of Cotton, are destined, like other branches of the commercial world, to feel and to deplore the curse of selfish obstruction. The sales yesterday were upwards of 5000 bags to the trade. There has been some export inquiry but the market closed tamely. The sales of the week amount to 37,000 bags.

The Money market is in a very unsatisfactory state. Cash is scarce and dear, and nothing but first-rate paper, and that at short dates, stands the least chance of discount in the London market. The railway projectors get their acts slowly and unsatisfactorily, and it is clear that a large number of the schemes before Parliament must be rejected. Months will elapse before the money which the Government has locked up—the ten per cent. on the amount of the capital—can find its way into general circulation, and thereby relieve the "tightness" which prevails. The effects of improvident speculation continue to manifest themselves in the plethora of the *Gazette*; where the broken-down seekers of fortune find a ready asylum. In time, the paying schemes will find their way into better hands, and while the weak holders go to the wall, the strong ones will rise to wealth and greatness on the wreck of ruined hopes and blighted hearts. Thus it has ever been—thus it will ever be. But the interval, which is bringing matters to