

## European News.

From Willmer and Smith's European Times, May 19.

## THE OREGON QUESTION.

Attention for some time past has been sufficiently fixed on the Oregon question by the proceedings in Congress. The doings there have concentrated the gaze of all who take an interest in the peace of the world. Now the scene is to be shifted—we are going to contribute our fuel to materials already so inflammable. It is reported that twenty gunners, two sergeants, two corporals, and two bombardiers, under the command of Capt. Blackwood, are to be despatched by the British government in their war steamer, *Terrible*, to Oregon, early next month; the vessel is to take an adequate supply of guns and stores; and 3000 excavators are to be sent to the same destination with all possible speed. This force and these men are professedly sent to the Hudson Bay Company's territory, but it would be useless to shut our eyes to the fact that the bare announcement of such an expedition, while the territory in question forms the subject of negotiation between the two governments, is calculated to produce no small excitement in America, amongst the parties who have been striving to fan the smouldering embers into a blaze.

Whether the expedition has been undertaken with the approbation of the American government or not, we cannot say. Most likely it has. The belief gains ground that all apprehensions of a war are at an end, and that Mr Polk has implicit confidence in the continuance of peace, as he has made no preparation for a conflict. We view the expedition to which we have referred, as the surest proof that the respective governments interested in the question have already come to an understanding which will allay all jealousy, and set at rest all apprehension. But we fear that the sensitive nerves of our transatlantic cousins may be rudely shocked by such a summary and unlooked for proceeding. The affair, in all probability, will elicit further information, and a new light cannot fail to be speedily thrown on the subject from this or the other side of the Atlantic.

The news which came to hand last week—first, that the House of Representatives had rejected the amendment of the Senate, and substituted a less amicable one of their own relative to the twelve months' notice; and secondly, that in a conference between the two Houses, the more pacific views of the Senate prevailed, caused a good deal of discussion in the press and in commercial circles, but produced no fears of a collision. It is needless to say that the Senate is held in higher estimation by the English people than the more democratic branch of Congress, and comparisons respecting the talent and attainments of each House are always made in favour of the Upper one. The more discreet way in which the Senate conducts its debates, and the superior class of men upon whom the dignity is conferred, are amongst the causes which give it a greater claim to the respect of our fastidious countrymen. The feeling of respect to which we allude has been increased since the sailing of the last steamer, by the circumstances arising out of the Oregon notice. If war should unhappily ensue, it will not be laid at the door of the fine spirits, who have interposed the weight of their legislative authority to strip the notice of everything offensive or degrading.

Incidentally, the state of our relations with America was brought under the notice of the House of Commons, on the evening of Friday. Lord John Russell made a pointed allusion to the subject, and in doing so, delivered himself in the following graceful and happy terms:—

Looking at one of the greatest nations of the globe, I am happy to find there are symptoms of returning feelings of amity and good will. When I read the speeches of Webster, Calhoun, and others I forget all the idle menace wafted across the Atlantic. I trust her Majesty's government will be able to fix finally the limits which divide the dominions of her Majesty from those of the United States; and I trust the convention or treaty which shall settle that boundary will be but the prelude of a more intimate connexion between us and the vast commonwealth of a free people; that we shall carry on together our manufactures and our agriculture, vying with each other, if you will, to make our productions more and more perfect, striving, in the neutral markets of the world for pre-eminence; striving, also, in our respective branches of production, that we may clothe them and they may feed us, but hoping that there never shall be occasion to cross the bayonets of Britain and America on any bloody field whatever. (Loud cheers.) Sir, with this wish, that such may be the prelude of this bill, to which I trust the other House of

Parliament, should it pass by a great majority here, will give their assent, I shall give my hearty support to the motion for the third reading. (Great cheering.)

Towards the close of his speech on the corn question, the same evening, Sir Robert Peel, determined not to be outdone in politeness by the leader of the opposition, spoke as follows:—

The noble lord (J. Russell) says he hopes that the discussions which have threatened the maintenance of amicable relations with the United States will be brought to a fortunate close. Sir, I think I can appeal to the course which we have pursued, against some obloquy, some misconstructions, some insinuations, that we were abandoning the honour of the country—I think I can appeal to the past experience of this government, that it has been our earnest desire, by every effort consistently with the national honour, to maintain friendly relations with every country on the face of the globe. This principle, so long as we are entrusted with the management of public affairs, will continue to influence us in respect to the settlement of our unfortunate differences with the United States. (Cheers.)

This, taken in connexion with the resolution of the Senate, gives us every reason to believe that we are at the end of our differences, and that a short time only can elapse before the possibility of a misunderstanding between England and America will be removed.

## DOMESTIC.

The incarceration of Mr. Smith O'Brien, who is now in the third week of his captivity in the "cellar" of the House of Commons, affords abundant scope for declamation in the columns of the Irish journals. Much fine writing is expended on a very sorry exhibition. The *Nation* is emphatically indignant. It is said that O'Connell is displeased with the O'Brien exhibition, and that a feud has arisen between them which will lead to the retirement of the member for Limerick from Conciliation-hall, and, it may be from public life altogether. We do not vouch for this as a fact—we merely give it as a rumour. It is currently bruited about the purlieus of the House of Commons; but it derives some countenance from the peremptory refusal of Mr. O'Brien to permit Mr. O'Connell to take the sense of the House relative to his discharge, and to the studied suppression of "Dan's" name in the "leaders" of the *Nation*. The feeling is attributed to jealousy, but this seems on the face of it preposterous. As long as O'Connell lives, he will be—must be—the great "card" in Ireland. Any popularity that Mr. O'Brien enjoys, he owes entirely to the influence of O'Connell; and it is conceivable that, after having made him what he is, he is now anxious to strangle his blushing honours in the bud. It is far more probable that O'Connell is disgusted with his obstinacy—sick of the tawdry display of "martyrdom" which Mr. O'Brien is now so comfortably passing through.

## COMMERCIAL.

The Corn trade is in a singular position. Notwithstanding the cry which was apprehended—little business has been doing, and the price of every description is receding. Since the sailing of the last packet the quotations have receded in the principal markets 5s. per quarter. The arrival of flour from the United States continues to be large and even from Ireland, we continue to receive daily abundant supplies. The markets are well supplied, and the probability that all the foreign grain now in bond will be released at the small duty when the Corn Bill has passed the House of Lords, adds, of course, to the existing depression.

In the continental ports prices have also given way.

The Money market has improved in some, and the news which came to hand last week from the United States, relative to the action of Congress on the Oregon question, was almost imperceptible on the effects on the Funds. The returns of the Bank of England show an increase in the circulation. The private deposits are on the decrease—so are the securities; but the bullion, we are happy to say, continues steadily to increase.

The rate of discount on our first-class foreign bills is 31-2 per cent.

The Commercial accounts from the Continent are encouraging. The great Leipzig fair has passed off well, and considerable quantities of English goods, which were sent on sale, found purchasers. German woollens are spoken of as having been flat at the fair.

Meetings for the winding up of Railways continue to be held with various results. Before the end of the session, it is probable that upwards of two hundred projected companies will have drawn their affairs to a close, and distributed what remains of their funds amongst

the shareholders. But even with this diminution, a sufficient number of projects will be before Parliament and the country to awaken alarm and to keep the Money market in a state of disquietude.

The Cotton market in the early and middle part of last week showed symptoms of improvement. The short crop is at last beginning to produce its work, and prices have improved on every description of American an eighth, and in some nearly a farthing per pound. This week there has been less doing, but nothing has occurred to alter the feeling which universally prevails that the staple must improve in value.

## THE CORN BILL.

The third reading of the Corn Bill has at length passed the House of Commons by the largest majority which it has yet commanded—ninety-eight. The greater part of the last and a portion of the preceding was consumed in the discussion. It is needless to say that public patience has been worn out by the flood of oratory which has impeded the transit of the measure. Every available stratagem to kill time has been put in requisition, and the tactics of the opposition has been bungling without being in the least effective. The speaking on the night on which the division took place was first rate. Many of the leading members of the House delivered their sentiments, and the addresses of Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel are pregnant with matter which will outlive the occasion that called their exercise.

But now that the measure has passed the Lower House, the question is still asked, what will the Lords do? They will pass the measure; of that our readers may rest satisfied. The large majority which transmits the measure to their Lordships' House will not be without its effect in influencing their decision. The general feeling is, that the Lords will pass the Corn Bill by a majority of at least fifty. Sir Jas. Graham, this week, expressed a decided opinion that the measure was safe in the hereditary branch of the Legislature. This is the feeling out of doors, and we are inclined to endorse this feeling with our individual opinion, which our readers will take for what it is worth.

The belief, nevertheless, is, that while the Corn Bill and the Tariff are safe, a dissolution of Parliament will take place in the course of the summer or autumn. The Sugar Duties is the rock which will send the Ministry adrift, and refractory members in both Houses, who have not had the moral courage to assert their opinions in defiance of the expressed wish of the nation, will atone for their absence of "pluck" by voting boldly against the new sugar scheme. This is the prevailing impression; it may be modified by time and circumstances; but at present the mutinous feeling is as we have described it.

Rumours prevail that the Premier will retire from office when the measures upon which he has based his character have passed. He is solicitous for repose. Nor can this be wondered at when it is remembered that Peel is drifting towards his sixtieth year. But who is to succeed him? Aye, "there's the rub." His party are afraid to loose him. His commanding talent—his executive knowledge—his great personal influence—and the long experience which he has had in every department of the State—make him invaluable as the leader of a great party. But the physical powers of nature wait not upon tact, nor talent, nor superior capacity. The same law of our existence which consigns the unlettered peasant to his mother earth, is daily doing its work upon the ruler of Empires—

Imperial Caesar dead, and turned to clay,  
May stop a hole to keep the wind away!

The retirement of Peel will involve, there is no doubt, a new combination of parties. The present state of the political world is an anomaly which cannot last for ever. In the event of Peel's retirement, Russell will succeed, and then the "Isle will be frightened from its propriety" by a contest between the Whigs and the Protectionists.

*Liverpool Timber Trade.*—The proposed reduction in the duties on foreign Timber will again be brought under the consideration of the House of Commons in the course of the present week.

The disagreement between the masters and their workmen connected with building, although it has been in some measure mitigated, continues to operate unfavourable on the Timber market; for the last few days, however, more confidence seems to be gaining ground by the trade, under the hope that an adjustment of the misunderstanding, which has now lasted for nearly eight weeks, is not far off, be-

cause when that shall arrive, a considerable demand will take place; besides, it is confidently stated that this market will not be so largely supplied by fresh imports as was at one time apprehended, because by the last advices from the Colonies, under date of the 27th ult., it appears that a large portion of the intended supplies of Timber, which had been prepared in the upper country for the purpose of being sent to the shipping ports for exportation, will be detained there until next season, the state of the rivers not admitting of its being transported.

On the 14th instant the undermentioned Timber and Deals were offered for sale by auction, with the following result:—1630 logs of Quebec yellow Pine, of which only 250 logs of fair quality were sold, at from 15d to 15½d per foot.

531 „ of St. John's yellow Pine, of fair size and quality, were put at 18d per ft. but no offer was made.

220 „ of St. John's birch, for which no offer was made.

1690 pieces St. John's spruce Deals, of which 500 were sold, at 17-16d per foot, and the remainder at 2 1-2d per foot.

The sales by private have been to a limited extent. A good cargo of Quebec yellow pine has been sold at 15d per foot, and it is reported that one or two cargoes have changed hands at something under that rate. For spruce deals there is an improved demand; good qualities may now be quoted at 2 1-2 per foot. No alterations to notice in other descriptions.—*Duncan and Ewing.*

*Eruption of Mount Hecla.*—Letters from Iceland, received at Copenhagen, state that a great misfortune had befallen that country in consequence of the present eruptions of Hecla; a fatal malady having attacked the cattle from eating herbage which had been covered by the volcanic ashes. "These ashes act more particularly on the bones of the animals which have swallowed them. Thus, on the bones of the feet there are formed, in less than twenty-four hours osseous excrescences of an oblong form, which gradually assume so formidable a development that they prevent the beasts from walking; the same phenomenon is then manifested in the lower jaw, which is at the same time enlarged, and extends in all directions so considerably that it eventually splits in several places; whilst on the teeth of the upper jaw there is formed a species of osseous needles, very long and pointed, which take root in the lower jaw, and even traverse it—a phase of the malady which always determines a fatal issue. As high winds had prevailed for some time, the volcanic ashes were scattered throughout the island; and a great number of cattle, especially oxen, cows, and sheep, had perished. If the eruption of Hecla is prolonged for two months more, all the rural proprietors who have not enough of hay to keep their herds—and the majority are in this situation—will be obliged either to slaughter their cattle, or to abandon them to certain death on the pastures thus poisoned by the volcanic ashes.

The eruption of Mount Hecla was extremely violent. The flames which issued from the three great craters attained a height of 14,000 feet; and their breadth exceeded the greatest breadth of the river Picensen, the most considerable river in Iceland. The lava had already formed lofty mountains; and amongst the masses of pumicestone vomited by the volcano, and which have been found at a distance of three-fourths of a mile, there were some which weighed half a ton. By the eruption of Hecla, the enormous quantities of snow and ice which have accumulated for several years on the sides of that mountain have melted, and partly fallen into the river Rangen, which has overflowed its banks several times. The waters of that river, which runs almost at the foot of mount Hecla, and which receives a large portion of the burning lava, were so hot that every day they cast upon the banks numbers of dead trout, almost half-baked. Every night vivid streaks of the aurora borealis illumined the sky.

*British Cotton Manufactures.*—A return has been made to Parliament giving an account of the total quantities and the declared value of cotton manufactures entered by the yard, exported from the United Kingdom in each year, from 1814 to 1845; as also the declared value of hosiery, lace, and small wares, in each year from the period mentioned. In 1814 the number of yard British cotton manufactures exported from the United Kingdom, was 192,340,826; the declared value of which was £16,450,750.