

The Politician.

THE BRITISH PRESS.

From Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper.
THE HARVEST OF THE SESSION.

THE closing Session has been a fruitful one. Jews are admitted to sit in the House of Commons; the Property Qualification is abolished; and the Government of India is transferred from Leadenhall-street to the Crown. It is true that the first of these results has been reached in an unsatisfactory manner; that Hebrews must creep into the House through a hole. But then they are not particular as to the manner in which they reach an end; and, we trust, there will not be many occasions on which 'the true faith of a Christian' need be expunged from the oath of a member of Parliament. A struggle that has lasted more than ten years between bigotted Tories and Churchmen and the Liberal men of the country, has been terminated in favour of the latter. The completion of religious toleration has been achieved. Baron Rothschild has been a mere instrument, and is a remarkable addition to the House in which he sits. It is even doubtful whether the City of London will again return him.

The abolition of the Property Qualification is a positive good achieved. We have here an old abuse swept away; an abuse that had become impotent, it is true, for the purposes which it was intended to accomplish, but which was something to be erased from the Statute Book.

It is, however, for the transfer of the government of India from the Company to the Crown, that the Parliamentary session of 1858 will be chiefly remarkable in history. When the revolt broke out in Bengal last year, Lord Palmerston was perhaps the most popular prime minister who has governed the destinies of this country within this century. He had a House of Commons chosen under his own auspices; he led a great majority; he was supposed to be about to crown his long career in the public service by the production of a new Reform bill; he was still the champion of liberty abroad. And now—the ministerial whitebait dinner eaten for 1858—where is the noble viscount? Where is his sturdy phalanx of supporters? Where is his prestige abroad? Why, all has been thrown down and trampled upon. Long years of vigorous foreign-office governorship ended in a mean endeavour to please a neighbouring sovereign at the expense of the liberties of Englishmen: chance of office annihilated by the discovery of a base plot to overthrow political opponents. The statesman who made Belgium a free state at great risk has fallen, in an endeavour to pander to the passions of an enraged tyrant; the very voluble talker about chivalrous courage has been found guilty of keeping back letters from his opponents to use them as political capital. His friend and fellow-conspirator, ex-King Smith, late of the Board of Control, has been thrust back with shameful rebukes into the congenial atmosphere of his perfect dressing-room; and all that it was believed, twelve months ago, popular Palmerston would achieve, has been accomplished by his political opponents.

Under the Conservatives religious toleration has been crowned; the property qualification has been abolished; and Leadenhall-street has been strangled. More, the Lagliari, with which Lord Palmerston dealt lamely and luke warmly, has been given up to Lord Malmesbury; repatriation has been promptly made to the aggrieved subjects of her Majesty. All, in short, that the aristocratic Whigs have promised so long, appears destined to be given by the Conservatives. Even the India bill, just passing, is a more liberal measure than that which Lord Palmerston submitted to Parliament.

Are we to deplore this defeat—this complete rout of the Whigs? Are we to bewail all that we have fallen on days of Tory government—that the narrow-minded Protectionists of the Corn-law times, are now fattening in Downing-street? The few followers who haunt, hoping against hope, the byeways of Cambridge-house, would have us weep and gnash our teeth. We are begged to remember that Lord Derby's administration is not a Liberal one; we are assured that its sympathies are not with the people; and that its popular measures are the result, not of its convictions, but rather of its necessities. Let us accept this view of Lord Derby & Co. Still, we reply, a squeezable government is better than one so slippery that, pretty and promising as it looks, it can never be held to its promises. It is our business to judge by results, not by the popularity of men. We would accept the ballot from Lord Derby with as true a gratitude as that which would have warmed us, had the noble member for Tiverton presented the box to us with his own hands. The people are anxious to see certain laws carried; and, so that they be carried, they care little whether Lord Palmerston or Mr. Disraeli sits upon the Treasury benches of the House of Commons. The reason is clear.

The people have been taught by the insincere conduct of public men generally to regard them as very cold instruments, to be shaped only by the very hardest pressure. They see that these men are drawn from one class almost exclu-

sively; that they are divided into two political parties, but that socially they have identical sympathies. Even Lord John Russell, who has been called the Champion of civil and religious Liberty, halts, as he presses on for parliamentary reform, when he sees that this reform, as resolved upon by the people, will harm the political influence of the House of Bedford. His lordship will serve the people while they ask nothing the tendency of which would be to endanger the domination of his own class.—Lord Palmerston closely resembles Lord John. Both are pure aristocrats at heart; and the men with whom they have always acted are determined to maintain the monopoly of government in the hands of patrician families.—The business of the public, therefore, is not to trust to the professions of patrician statesmen, but to press upon Whig and Tory alike, for those reforms which the country requires. Both the admission of Jews to Parliament, and the Abolition of the Property Qualification, are measures which public opinion has forced upon the government; the former measure was, indeed, carried, in spite of opposition on the part of members of the government. It has been the business of the ministry to yield; and they have proved, it must be confessed on all hands, a most squeezable government.

While we are willing to own, therefore, that a good harvest has been the result of the closing session, we are not prepared to give ministers all the credit of it. The share in the India bill No. 3, which the *Times* takes to itself, is not altogether unfairly taken. Unquestionably ministers have narrowly watched public opinion, and have been eager to follow its dictates. They have regarded the *Times* as an important expression of this opinion, and have been often guided by its writing. Their career is a proof, not of their statesmanship, but of the growing power of the public, through public organs. The session now dying out has been an echo—a faint one, perhaps, but still an echo—of the public will. We are able to discern in the state of parties which the House of Commons now exhibits, the dawning of a direct power to be exercised by the people over ministers. When this power is fully felt, ministers will not be simply the well-educated scions of old political houses; they will be chosen, irrespective of their quarterings, and for their capacity alone. It is strange that it should be reserved for a Conservative government to exhibit the dawn of this new political era.

From the Liverpool Mail.

INDIA NEWS.

We have later news from India—for the most part of an encouraging character. The capture of Gwalior is confirmed; and the circumstances under which it was effected, by Sir Hugh Rose, are in the highest degree creditable to his courage as a soldier and to his skill as a commander. His movements were as rapid and energetic as his success was decisive. There was, indeed, no time to be lost. A valuable ally had been sacrificed; a place of considerable strength was in possession of the rebels. It was necessary to prove to the native princes of India that England knew how to appreciate, and was still strong enough to protect, those who, in an atmosphere of treason, had adhered loyally and faithfully to her cause. It was no less necessary to break up what promised to become, unless it were promptly destroyed, the focus of a formidable and dangerous revolutionary organisation. Thanks to Sir Hugh Rose, both these objects have been accomplished. Scindiah—who had been abandoned by his army, driven from his capital, and compelled to seek safety in flight—has been formally restored to the position of which treachery and mutiny had deprived him; while his rebel soldiers, become fugitives in their turn, have been overtaken by a swift and terrible retribution.

When the last mail left Calcutta the European inhabitants of that 'city of palaces' were in a state of deep despondency. The desertion of Scindiah's troops was regarded as an indication of 'the thorough antagonism of the military classes.' The capture of Gwalior was described as having 'given new courage to the scoundrels serving in the neighbouring provinces.' The roads near Agra were 'proclaimed unsafe.' And the croakers and alarmists feared and prophesied the worst. Doubtless the worst might have happened, if the redemption of the disaster had been entrusted to less energetic hands. But within a fortnight after Scindiah had been driven out of Gwalior, the Central India Field Force, with Sir Hugh Rose at its head, and the Sepree Brigade, under the command of Brigadier Smith, had concentrated around the place. With only a single day's delay offensive operations were commenced, and four days afterwards the fort—formidable as it is, and almost impregnable as it was deemed to be—again fell into our hands. The main body of the mutineers succeeded in making good their escape; but they were promptly followed by Brigadier-General Napier, who overtook them, on the 21st, near Goura-Alipore—attacked and utterly routed them—'cut up a considerable number, and captured 25 guns.' The only thing to be regretted is, that the force of the Brigadier was not strong enough to annihilate them altogether, for we are told that those who escaped were concentrating again upon the 26th of June—that they still retained a few small

guns and elephants—and that they were supposed to be meditating an attack either on Jeypore or Churpore. General Roberts, however, was already on his way to intercept them, and we may safely rely upon him for the adoption of such vigorous measures as will prevent their doing any very serious mischief.

From Oude, too, we have news of another victory. A body of 20,000 rebels had concentrated in and about Nowabgunge. Sir Hope Grant came up with them upon the 13th of June, attacked them without hesitation, defeated them after three hours hard fighting, and finally drove them across the Gogra, with the loss of six guns, and 600 men. The rebels fought desperately, and stood their guns well; they outnumbered the British troops by at least five to one; they had excellent artillery, and apparently plenty of ammunition. Nevertheless they were utterly routed, and more than one of their chiefs were left dead upon the field, while the loss on our side was insignificant—only six men having been killed, and about thirty wounded. Successes like these—sustaining, as they do, the prestige of the British arms—must have a powerful moral effect upon the whole native population.

Among the minor matters of intelligence, of a satisfactory character, we notice in the Gorkh-pore district the defeat of the rebels, under Mohamed Hossein, by the column under Major Cox; in the Allahabad division, the dispersion of a large marauding party by a comparatively small body of Madras Light Cavalry; in the Agra division the surrender of the rebel Rajah of Dympoorie; and in the Rohileund division the death of the notorious Moulvie, for whose apprehension a reward of £5000 had been offered, and who appears to have lost his life, in an unsuccessful attempt upon Peyhannee, with a force of 5000 men. On the other hand, we hear with regret of the escape of large bodies of the Jugdespoore rebels into Oude, and into the country south of the Ganges, where they are reported to be plundering and burning all the villages whose inhabitants are loyal, peaceable, and well-affected towards British rule.

Taken as a whole, as we said at the outset, the good news by this arrival far outweighs the bad. Our most formidable enemy, at this moment, is the terrible heat of the climate, which is thinning our ranks far more rapidly than the most sanguinary war would do; and against which neither valour nor energy can avail. Happily we have a Government fully alive to the necessity of sending out large reinforcements, by the speediest possible route, and with the least possible delay. We may hope, therefore, that during the ensuing cold season, considerable progress towards the complete pacification of the country will be very materially aided by the proclamation which Lord Canning, acting in the spirit of Lord Ellenborough's despatch, is said to have issued in Oude, granting an amnesty to all but murderers. The decree of indiscriminate vengeance, which that dispatch most properly rebuked, would, we verily believe, if it had been persevered in, have made the restoration of peace impossible.

News of the Week.

From English Papers to the 1st August.

CHINA.

The Capture of the Forts of Peiho.—We are indebted to an officer of the United States Frigate Mississippi for the following interesting account of the capture of the forts at the mouth of the Peiho. The United States steam frigate Mississippi reached this on Sunday evening, the 30th ult., having left the Gulf of Pechellee on the afternoon of the 22nd. She brings news of the commencement of hostilities. As negotiations had, as was to be expected, totally failed, Lord Elgin placed the affair in the Admiral's hands, and he proceeded with his usual promptitude to bring it to an issue.

The mouth of the Peiho is defended by forts on each bank, about a mile and a half from the upper edge of the bar, which averages from a half to three-quarters of a mile in width. Beyond this, and about 4 miles and a half distant lay the larger ships. On the evening of the 19th all preparations were made for the attack by the gunboats and ships lying inside the bar. At seven A. M., Captain Hall, of the Calcutta, pulled in and desired the forts to surrender, telling them if the flags were hauled down by 9 A. M., the forts would be taken possession of peacefully; if the flags were not hauled down, firing would commence and the forts be captured by force. Nine o'clock came, but no sign of surrender, and therefore another hour was given them. The two admirals were on board the gunboat Slaney, with the English and French pennants flying. The *Cormorant*, which was the leading ship of the attack, had been lying close up to the forts on the right bank of the river, and the people of the forts had been observed training their guns on her. At ten A. M. the flag of battle was hoisted by all the gunboats and steamers along the line, with the exception of the *Cormorant*, which ran up the French flag, almost at the same moment running her anchor up to her bows, and getting under way. On her deck were only to be seen three solitary individuals—the captain, Samarez, the master conning the ship, and the

steersman, the men lying down at their quarters. She gradually edged over towards the forts on the right bank, running past them in beautiful style, fired upon as she passed each fort without returning a gun. During her passage she got hulled ten times; but, owing to closing so much on the forts, their shot for the most part passed over her without doing damage. After passing them she ran over to the left shore, and, running into the mud with her broadside to the forts on that side, commenced the action. She was followed by two French gunboats and the *Nimrod*, which latter vessel came to the assistance of her comrade.—The different gunboats took up their stations, and as they fell into them opened fire with precision. After about an hour's cannonading, to which the Chinese reply was quick but ineffective, the *Slaney*, with the Admirals on board, ran straight up through the fleet, towing the attacking columns under Sir F. Nicholson of the *Pique*, and the *Opossum* towing another party under Captain Hall. The French supplied an attacking party for the forts on the right bank. The boats pushed off and the men were soon on shore. Then followed the usual scene—the Chinese bolted, and the French attack being made very quickly, a mine was sprung, which caused them considerable loss. The forts on the left bank were taken by the British without much loss, although mines were also exploded on their advance, by the bursting of one of which the carpenter of the *Calcutta* and two seamen were killed. In about an hour and forty minutes we were in possession of all the forts at the mouth of the river.

The admiral then proceeded on board the *Cormorant*, while Admiral de Genouilly went on board one of his gunboats. At this time a mass of flames from a number of fire-rafts was observed drifting round a point of land higher up; by some mismanagement the rafts were allowed to go too far over to the right bank, and there the leading rafts speedily grounded, while the others were helped into a position by the boats of the fleet. Had they taken the right direction the *Cormorant* would have had a narrow squeak, as she was rather tight in the mud. Sir Michael, leaving the *Cormorant*, returned to the *Slaney*, but Admiral de Genouilly continued on board his gunboat. The *Slaney* and *Cormorant*, with other gunboats, steamed up to attack a large fort mounting thirty-one guns, situate round the bend of the river, while the *Nimrod* was left to direct her fire at the fort over the spit of ground. In a short time this fell into our hands, and in about two hours and a half from the commencement of the attack the action had ceased by the capture of all the forts.

We are happy to say the loss on our side was very slight, only one officer, the master of the *Opossum*, being severely wounded by a shot in the side and thigh. We have no exact or reliable particulars of the loss on the British side, but do not hear that it exceeds twenty-five killed and wounded. Our allies, we are sorry to say, owing to the explosion of a mine, suffered more severely, fifteen men, it is said, being killed and forty men wounded; some of the latter dreadfully burnt and torn by the explosion. Among the killed are four lieutenants. One, the first of the *Fusee*, was cut in two by a shot; another had his cap knocked off by a shot, on which he exclaimed—'I am lucky to-day,' but immediately fell down dead, without the mark of any wound on his person.

The Chinese stuck to their guns manfully, and there were the usual acts of self-sacrifice. One blue-buttoned mandarin was found by the French in the fort which they had captured, dead, beside a gun, having cut his throat; and in the assault on the highest fort of thirty-one guns a mandarin jumped out and charged the party single-handed. The officers did all they could to prevent him being killed, but one of the men on the flanks, at some distance, shot him through the neck and killed him, to the regret of those near, who admired his bravery. About ninety-eight guns were captured, sixty-eight of which were brass or composition metal. Some were eight inch guns, but we believe they had none of the usual appliances of sights. The loss of the Chinese is supposed to have been very heavy, as the firing was very accurate, the shells bursting with great precision in the embrasures. The Chinese fired grape, and even attempted shells, but, as their fusee was only a piece of common slow match, the shell generally burst close to the gun.

Next day, the 21st, a mandarin went off to the Russian ambassador, who has been acting in conjunction with Mr. Reed as a mediator between the parties. Count Putiatine went with him to the French admiral, but it was some time before they could persuade him to go and see Sir Michael; eventually he did so, and asked for three days' truce. Sir Michael told him he could not give him an hour's truce, as they had been given plenty of time, and that he certainly should at once proceed to Tien-tsin with all his force. The unfortunate mandarin went away considerably crestfallen. We understand the admiral intends to do much the same as at Canton, securing the river at different points by anchoring a steamer. The river to Tien-tsin is of sufficient depth for the largest ships now over the bar, but above Tien-tsin to Pekin, a distance of eighty miles, the water is said to be very shallow, boats drawing more than five feet not being