

EDINBURGH ELECTION.—On Thursday, the Speaker read a letter from Mr. Charles Cowan, stating that previous to his election he had taken part in a contract with Her Majesty's Stationery Office; and though he no longer held that contract, he was advised that he should make himself liable to penalties if he were to take the oaths and his seat for Edinburgh; this he declined to do.

CATHOLIC DISABILITIES.—On Thursday, Mr. Anstey obtained leave to bring in a bill to amend the law relating to Roman Catholic Charities; also another bill for the further repeal of penal enactments against Roman Catholics on account of their religion. Sir George Grey did not oppose the introduction of the former bill, but hinted at "difficulties." Sir Robert Inglis threatened determined opposition.

JEWISH DISABILITIES.—Lord John Russell gave notice, on Thursday, that on that day fortnight he should move for leave to bring in a bill for the relief of Her Majesty's Jewish subjects from civil disabilities.

EXCISE LAWS.—In reply to Mr. Hume, on Thursday, Sir Charles Wood said that it was his hope—he would not absolutely say his intention, but he might almost say it was his intention—to introduce a measure for the purpose of removing all Excise restrictions which could be considered to have an objectionable bearing upon trade.

MR. STEPHEN.—On Wednesday Mr. Anstey adverted to the rumoured resignation of Mr. Stephen, Under-Secretary in the Colonial Office; he observed that Mr. Merivale had been gazetted as Mr. Stephen's successor, but Mr. Stephen's resignation had not been formally announced. Lord John Russell begged to inform the honorable Member, that Mr. Stephen had obtained leave of absence, on the ground of ill health, and that Mr. Merivale had merely been appointed *Assistant Under-Secretary*.

The Queen held a Court and Privy Council at Windsor Castle on Monday. At the Court Her Majesty gave audience to the Marquis of Normanby, who was presented by Viscount Palmerston, and also to the Marquis of Lansdowne.

The Council was attended by Prince Albert, the Lord President, Lord John Russell, the Secretaries of State, and other Ministers. Mr. Richard More O'Ferrall took the oaths and his seat as a Privy Councillor. The Queen's Speech was settled; and a charter of incorporation was granted to Wakefield.

On Tuesday the Queen and Prince Albert, accompanied by the children and attended by the suite, left the Castle for the Isle of Wight, travelling by railway. They arrived at the Clarence Yard at about half past twelve, embarked on board the *Fairy*, and reached Osborne at half past one.

The Lord Chamberlain, who arrived from town on Wednesday, had an audience of the Queen the same afternoon, and returned to London on Thursday.

The Queen has conferred upon Lord Normanby the Grand Cross of the Bath vacant by the death of Sir Robert Gordon.

Previously to the meeting of Parliament on Tuesday, the First Lord of the Treasury withdrew the recent letter to the Bank of England, in the following terms:—

"Downing Street, Nov. 23, 1847.

"Gentlemen,—Her Majesty's Government have watched with the deepest interest the gradual revival of confidence in the commercial classes of the country.

"They have the satisfaction of believing that the course adopted by the Bank of England, on their recommendation, has contributed to produce this result, whilst it has led to no infringement of the law.

"It appears from the accounts which you have transmitted to us, that the reserve of the Bank of England has been for some time steadily increasing, and now amounts to £5,000,000. This increase has, in a great measure, arisen from the return of notes and coin from the country.

"The bullion exceeds £10,000,000, and the state of the exchanges promises a further influx of the precious metals.

"The knowledge of these facts by the public is calculated to inspire still further confidence.

"In these circumstances, it appears to Her Majesty's Government that the purpose which they had in view in the letter which we addressed to you on the 25th October, has been fully answered, and that it is unnecessary to continue that letter any longer in force.—We have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed)

"J. RUSSELL.

"CHARLES WOOD.

"The Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank of England."

Three failures were reported on the Stock Exchange yesterday; the defaulters being, Mr. Charles Young, Mr. J. H. Hawkins, and Mr. Henry Turner, all jobbers.

News of the suspension of Messrs. W. Farthing, Son, and Co., of Hull, reached town yesterday afternoon. The liabilities of the firm are not mentioned; but the assets are said to show 10s. in the pound, "which they can realize immediately."

In the course of Saturday, it became known that Mr. John Williams, junior, a highly respectable member of the Stock Exchange, had suspended payments. The differences against him amount to about £20,000, and his assets are expected to pay 15s. in the pound.

On Tuesday, the drafts of the West India Bank were refused by their agents, the Union Bank of London. The capital of the bank is only £120,000; but its liabilities are very large, indeed wholly out of the proportion to the amount. The head office of the bank was at Bridgetown, Barbados; and it had branches at St. Christopher, St. Vincent, Grenada, Antigua, Tobago, and Trinidad.

It was announced on the same day, that Messrs. J. and H. Reay, an old and respectable firm in the wine-trade, had stopped payment. The actual debts, it is said, do not exceed £20,000; but from the extent of the dealings, the liabilities in the shape of endorsements on bills are considerable, and it is from the default of the parties primarily responsible upon these that the necessity for stoppage is understood to have arisen.

Messrs. Lackersteen and Co., East India merchants, whose acceptances were temporarily dishonored on the 23d October, and who have since made great efforts to sustain themselves, were finally compelled, on the arrival of the Indian mail, to give in. The remittances then received were in bills on Cockerell and Company, and the Union Bank of Calcutta; whose drafts were declined by Messrs. Glyn and Co., about a month ago.

Another East India firm, that of Thompson and Co., failed at Liverpool on Monday. The head of the house is Captain Thompson, the hero of Ghuznee. There are said to be ample resources to meet the liabilities.

On Thursday were announced the failures of three brokers—Mr. Henry Whitmore, Mr. William Eykyn, and Messrs. Secretan and Capper (sacrificed by a principal); of a stock-jobber, Mr. Wm. Abbott; and of Messrs. Tanner and Ward, leather-sellers. Mr. Whitmore's liabilities are £12,000, his assets 6s. 8d. in the pound; Messrs. Tanner and Ward are liable for £55,000.

Mr. Ashburner, a Liverpool leather-factor, failed on Thursday: liabilities £30,000 or £40,000.

From Newcastle-on-Tyne, we hear of the failure of Messrs. Carr and Co., general merchants, for about £70,000.

In Glasgow, on Wednesday, Messrs. A. and J. Downie, dry-salters, suspended payment: liabilities £150,000 or £170,000.

From Rotterdam we learn the stoppage of two houses—Riewit and Saugeveldt, and B. Rouffaer and Sons; the amount in both cases small.

Three Arctic expeditions are in preparation to go in search of Sir John Franklin and his party. One will be despatched in a few days to Behring's Straits; for which service the Plover brig is under a process of fitting at Sheerness. A second, in command of Sir John Ross, will sail in the spring to Baffin's Bay; and a third, an overland expedition, is to leave England in March for Canada, under command of Sir John Richardson.

It is intended for the future to keep a permanent naval force at New Zealand. It will consist of one frigate, one sloop of war, and a steam-sloop. Orders have been sent out to form a naval depot at Auckland; and such stores and provisions as cannot be procured at that colony will be sent out from England.—*United Service Gazette*.

A fatal accident occurred last week on the Forth and Clyde Canal. Mr. and Mrs. Campbell of Blythswood, and their son, aged about six, were returning in a carriage from a visit near Milgavie; while they were crossing the canal at Temple Lock, near Garscube, the horses shied, driving the carriage against the side-rails of the bridge: the rails gave way, and the horses with the carriage were precipitated into the lock. In some way which is unexplained, Mr. and Mrs. Campbell got out of the carriage, either through the door or window. Aid was speedily on the spot, and roaps were thrown down, by which Mr. Campbell sustained his wife until the water could be let out of a higher lock, so as to float them within reach of help. The little boy, who remained in the carriage, sank with it, and was drowned. The coachman and footman escaped; but the horses were killed.

SWITZERLAND.—The accounts from the seat of war are very imperfect, and somewhat confused. The Federal Commissioners appointed by the Diet arrived in Friburg on the 15th, and had a conference with all the leading men of both parties. The result was the formation of a Provisional Government to act in concert with the Commissioners. Great difficulty was experienced, says the Federal accounts, in repressing the outrages perpetrated by the men of the Landsturm, of whom some hundreds remained in Friburg, fully armed. Several of the Federal soldiers were assassinated by them; and the Federal Commander, Colonel Rilliet, had proclaimed martial law, and expelled several hundred suspected persons from the place. On the other side, there are loud complaints of wanton tyranny. The Provisional Government has published a proclamation exhorting the people to preserve order and obey the laws; and promising a revision of the finances, respect for person and property, freedom of conscience and worship, &c.

The *Journal des Debats* announces that M. Bois le Comte quitted Berne on the evening of the 17th, and withdrew to Bâle with all the persons attached to the French Embassy. M. Bois le Comte wishing to send one of his secretaries to Lucerne, had demanded a passport of General Dufour. It appears that this request was refused; and M. Bois le Comte had, in consequence, considered that it was impossible for him to remain at Berne. The ground of the refusal is said to be the discovery that the agents of the French Embassy were instrumental in conveying secret information to the chief of the Sonderbund.