NEWS BY THE ENGLISH MAIL.

THE TREATY OF PEACE DEBATE.

The debate which has occupied both Houses of Parliament this week, relative to the terms of peace, is undoubtedly a great triumph for the Government. In all their bearings the terms were looked at, argued, analysed, and the result was, that the opposition in the lower as well as in the upper chamber were beaten to a dead stand. An amendment on the address was moved in each House, but the objectors shrunk from a division,—conclusive evidence, we take it, that "political capital" could not be made out of the affair. When it is remembered how our party conflicts are carried on, that most of the members in the popular branch of the Legislature prepare their speeches with immediate reference to the hustings, especially in a Parliament which is rapidly dying of old age, and that in this instance, those who professed to be dissatisfied with the cessation of hostilities shrunk from giving their hostility to the treaty of peace a practical form, it will be seen, that the diplomatic triumph which we have secured at the expense of Russia is much more popular with the nation generally than could have been anticipated a few months back. Unable to assault with any effect the treaty of Paris, the opposition directed their attention to hostilities with the fall of Kars, and to the peers, Lord Malmesbury delivered the speech which he was compelled to suppress when the wind was knocked out of Mr. Whiteside by the division in the other House the previous week. In this mixing up of extraneous matter we see the straits to which the opposition were reduced. But even this objection did not answer, for Lord Clarendon showed conclusively that the fall of Kars, unfortunate as it was, had really no effect upon the proceedings of the Conference. The terms proposed by Austria to Russia were accepted, before the fall of Kars was known, and on this head the foreign secretary expressed substantially the same views on the evening of Monday to which we gave utterance in our last issue.

If a comparison be instituted between talent evolved in two Houses respectively on Monday on this important subject, the balance is decidedly in favour of the hereditary branch of the Legislature. Nothing could be finer or in better taste, than the speeches of the noble mover and seconder of the address; and the speech which the Earl of Ellesmere delivered on this occasion makes us regret that, with his exquisite literary taste, his sound reasoning, and strong common sense, he does not take a more frequent part in the deliberations of the assembly of which he is so distinguished an ornament. If to these addresses we add those of Lords Clarendon and Derby, the subject may be said to have been exhausted in the second branch of the three estates. But the Commons, inspirited probably by the talent and the tone of the Lords, put forth their power the following evening; and the most searching, far-seeing, and statesmanlike speech of the entire debate in either House was that delivered by Mr. W. E. Gladstone. Points which had escaped others were brought out by him with remarkable freshness and originality; and that portion of the proceedings of the Conference which had reference to the press, and more especially Count Walewski's proposition for curbing the press of Belgium, in order to make its strictures palatable to our ally, the Emperor of the French, was treated by Mr. Gladstone in a spirit which cannot fail to elicit the warm approval of every friend to freedom. Nothing could be in better taste than the conclusion of his remarks on this head, and he has thrown a new light on the subject by its comparison of the law relative to the press as it exists in England and in Belgium, and by showing that in both countries, aggrieved parties, however high or low, whether natives or foreigners, whether living on the spot or in other countries, have their remedy, through the medium of a jury, for any wrong which they may have suffered from a newspaper. But, as Mr. Gladstone demonstrated, the pretext for interfering with the liberty of the press of Belgium is wholly unsubstantial. At the Conference, Count Walewski's chief argument for the interference was based on the assumption, that persons disaffected towards the French Government passed the frontiers and made the Belgian press the vehicle for the dissemination of their poison against the Government of Louis Napoleon. The answer to this statement is complete. No person is permitted to leave France without a passport, no person is permitted to enter Belgium without a passport,—a check in both instances the most complete, whatever we may think of its justice or necessity. Besides, the freedom allowed to foreigners or refugees in Belgium is much less liberal than in England. This class of persons in the Netherlands are compelled to reside in a particular part of each city, there are under the constant surveillance of the Government, and if detected in any act at all likely to compromise the little kingdom with its more powerful neighbours, are forced to leave the country,—precautions much more stringent than any which exist with us. The suppression of a press guarded in this jealous manner can mean nothing more nor less than the extinction of all political discussion—reducing the organs of public opinion to the same humiliation and slavery which rule in despotic countries, where the sovereign's will is the supreme law. A protest against such a course by a statesman like Mr. Gladstone, untrammelled at present by the letters of office, against an interference which would be most strongly resisted by the British nation on two grounds,—first, an abstract love of liberty; and secondly, a belief that if the high hand of power succeeded against the press of Beligium, a similar crusade would speedily be made against the press of England,—cannot fail to impress the French authorities, and those of the Continent generally with the serious results to which it is more than probable such an attempt would give rise.

Lord Clarendon, in the course of this debate stated a very extraordinary fact, which we do not remember to have seen previously. He had been twitted, because the treaty made no provision for the independence of the Circassian tribes, nor for the demolition of the Russian fortresses on their coast. His reply disposed of the objection. "It is a remarkable fact," said he, "that the only period during which there had been no military movements whatever against the Russians on the part of Schamyl and the Circassians has been the two years of war. They have never shown the slightest sympathy with us, nor the least desire to assist our arms. On one occasion, indeed, a chief did engage with the captain of one of her Majesty's ships to produce 10,000 men at a particular place on a particular day; but when the officer went to receive them, he could not find a single man. The only evidence we had of their feeling was their declaration to obstruct our progress along the east coast of the Sea of Azoff. There could be no better authority as to the disposition of the Circassians, than Gen. Williams, who, in a letter to myself, dated the 13th of April, 1855, informed me, that Schamyl was only to be found when invading army arrived near Tiflis; and that it was a notorious fact that this too much-vaunted chieftain did not even succeed during the last campaign in pillaging that town. In another letter, of so late a date as the 21st of August, 1855, General Williams states, that at that time nothing was known of Schamyl's movements, and that the restoration of his son, together with large sums of money in the form of ransoms, might account for this inaction on the part of the Circassian chief." It is perfectly evident, from this explanation by Lord Clarendon, that we have been labouring under a delusion in this country respecting the real character of Schamyl. We were accustomed to regard him as another Abdel-Kader, fighting for the liberties of his country against a foreign yoke; whereas he turns out to be a paltry fellow, who can be bought by Russian gold at a moment when a stern patriotism would have preserved his own and his fellow-mountaineers' independence in all future time.

The present has been a week of felicitations—every body "merry as a marriage bell." The Queen held a grand state ball at Buckingham Palace on Thursday, on which occasion the new apartments, of which elaborate descriptions appear in the morning papers of yesterday, were thrown open. The guests numbered 1900, and comprised the elite of London society, with a sparkling of the commonalty. Literature was personified in the person of Mr. Charles Dickens, and poetry in that of Mr. Alfred Tennyson. We perceive that the company included several persons connected with this locality, our townsman, Mr. Thomas Thornly, for example, Mr. C. Pascoe Grenfell, and other well-known characters. This may be said to have been the "Peace Ball," and to mark her appreciation of the occasion, her Majesty has given a free and full pardon to all persons under sentence for political offences. This will, of course, extend to the chartists who were transported many years back—Frost, Jones, and Williams, if they be still living, and to another and still more celebrated offender, Mr. William Smith O'Brien. The last named gentleman has been for some years past residing on the continent. With a return to his native land, he will find great changes there, and as he will come back wiser and sadder, there is every reason to believe that the experience of the past will not have been lost upon him. "Sweet are the uses of adversity."

The Queen's Ministers were at the Mansion-house the previous evening, enjoying the Lord Mayor's hospitality, and the occasion was opportune for indulging in the reciprocal compliments which follow the cessation of a great war. All the foreign ambassadors were present, with the exception of the representative of the United States, who was enjoying himself at a celebration in his own country, and the number of titled and untitled beauties grouped around the board of the Lord and Lady Mayoress imparted to this civic feast an additional charm. The principal speeches of the evening were, of course, those delivered by Lord Palmerston and the Earl of Clarendon—the one in his capacity as the head of the Government, the other the director of the foreign policy of the country. Both were very appropriate, and considering how frequently both speakers had been compelled in public to travel over the same ground recently, wonderfully diversified. Lord Clarendon's allusion to the brave General Williams was pointed and happy, and his Lordship's eulogy on that distinguished, but ill supported, officer has since been echoed by the foreign and both Houses of Parliament. General Williams, for his services at Kars, has been created a baronet, with a pension of £1000 a year—a sum hardly adequate to his services, if we compare them with those of others who have fared pecuniarily better. But the coupliment, nevertheless, is a handsome one, which has been hailed by the public with pleasure.

We have mentioned the absence of Mr. Dallas, the American minister, from the Mansion-house. He dined the same evening with the friends and subscribers to the Literary Fund, where he made the speech of the evening. The American Government has frequently been represented at the Court of St. James's by very able men; but we can call to mind no Minister of the United States who has won such general admiration in this country in so short a time. The literary power and elegance of this gentleman's after-dinner addresses are perfect models in their way. They are so pointed and so terse, and marked by such an elevated tone, that they charm in the reading, even more than they impress in the delivery. His allusion to the fact of the great Benjamin Franklin, his countryman, having been, towards the close of the last century, the President of this same Literary Fund Association, was only excelled in good taste by the reference to the Englishman who established, in the United States, a kindred institution. If popularity in this aristocratic country be any test of admiration at home, Mr. Dallas ought to stand well at the Presidential ballot-boxes on some forthcoming occasion.

Lord Palmerston has also been "doing the amiable" for the army and navy in the House of Commons; and Lord Panmure a similar duty in the House of Lords. Every body is praised, past blunderings are forgotten, and the animosities of political strife are for the time buried in the general ovation. The eulogies on the bravery of the troops and the military events of the campaign were in very good taste, for certainly the sterling qualities of British soldiers, after so long a peace, deserve all praise. It seems that our loss by death and casualities of all kinds in the course of the war did not exceed 22,000 men, whereas, the loss of the enemy amounted *to half a million of souls*—an enormous disproportion. For the navy, the encomiums of the Premier were more subdued. They had less to do, he contended, as the enemy would not come out to fight; but they rendered excellent service in various ways to the land forces. If they had had a chance of encountering the Russian fleet in the Baltic or the Black Sea, the navy, his Lordship showed, would have maintained their ancient *prestige*. Not to lack generosity on this interesting occasion, Mr. Disraeli seconded the motion to our naval and military heroes in the House of Commons, and the same duty was well and gracefully performed by Lord Derby in the house of Peers.

The tide has turned in favour of Lord Palmerston. The Kars shoal, on which he was to have gone to pieces, has been in reality his saviour; and it is believed—nay, positively asserted—that, the war being over, some of the Peelite party who deserted his Cabinet in the hour of need will return to it. As they are the ablest administrators in the kingdom in the time of peace, such an accession of moral power will give Lord Palmerston a new lease of Downing-street. Sir George Cornewall Lewis has been a failure as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and as Mr. W. E. Gladstone, during the time he filled that office, was one of the most popular financiers of our day—as he had won the the confidence of commercial men, by combining prudence with a daring originality, the business men of the city would be glad to see him restored to the position which he so ably filled; while Mr. Cardwell, Sir James Graham, Mr. Sydney Herbert, the Duke of Newcastle, and others, would form excellent substitutes for men every way inferior, who now hold leading positions in the Government. If this arrangement be carried out, Lord Palmerston will be in the position of a theatrical or an operatic manager who has more first-class performers, than he can find first-class parts for. This may be embarrassing in a personal sense to the First Minister; but the country will have no reason to complain that there is a superfluity of the highest order of statesmanship in the market. The Peelites, too, are great favorites in Parliament. Their eloquence and their practical ability are acknowledged by all, and as their sympathies incline more to the Whigs than to the Derbyites, they would materially strengthen and uphold the existing administration. What is wanted now is a series of excellent domestic measures to follow the events of the war, and although it may be too late to introduce such measures during the present session, the bringing of them forward in the early part of next year—the last year of the present Parliament—would be a master-stroke of state policy. If defeated in the carrying of such needful reforms, the Administration could appeal to the nation with the certainty of receiving a hearty response. Lord Palmerston was always regarded as an accomplished tactician, and he seems to be in a fair way, not only of sustaining, but of adding to his laurels in this phase of official life.

The foreign news of the week is unusually scanty. The most important event is the publication of a Ministerial pamphlet in France, which reviews the war, shows how it has elevated France, advocates the continuance of the English alliance, and glorifies the Emperor. Second in interest to this is a proclamation issued by the Czar of Russia, relative to the mismanagement of his hospitals in the Crimea. The Emperor censures the offenders, and calls for a court-martial on their conduct, with a view to severe punishment in the event of conviction. This is the most telling sarcasm which could be uttered or written on the military farce, which we are now enacting at Chelsea.