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SIR ROBERT PEEL'S SPEECH ON THE CORN LAWS

(From the Morning Herald.)

The speech of Sir Robert Peel, last night, was worthy of his genius, was worthy of his position, was worthy of the mighty cause which boasts the benefit of his advocacy.

Sir Robert reviewed the whole course of argument, which has been employed by the enemies of English agriculture throughout the recent corn-law debate; and, on all the leading points, he submitted to the house the most curious, nay, at times, the most startling refutation of the various free-trade doctrines. He showed how the assertors of the existence of deep manufacturing distress had gradually, yet completely, changed their ground. He showed the fallacy of all their assertions in reference to a decline of manufacturing profits, by showing (and the statement is no less striking than true) that the small manufacturing capitals occupy now, relatively to the great capitalists, a position, not dissimilar to that occupied by the handloom weaver, relatively to the weaver with the powerloom.

Sir Robert then entered into a consideration of the question of "dear bread," and of the actual condition of the labouring poor under influence of high-priced corn. The proofs, on this point, which he deduced from the state of the savings banks, were of the most irresistible kind; and the withering rebuke which he administered to the concoctors of the present scheme of agitation will not speedily be forgotten by the anti-corn-law delegates, and by their patrons in the cabinet.

Having discussed the purely-manufacturing portion of the question, Sir Robert proceeded to consider the general influences of our system of corn laws, and the preposterous character of the objections which have been urged against that system by the anti-corn-law agitators. Scarcely in parliamentary discussion has there been witnessed any result more brilliant than the result of the comparison by Sir Robert Peel of the logical tendencies of the facts and arguments employed in reference to the corn laws by the advocates of free trade. The right hon. baronet singled out the statements and reasoning of Lord John Russell, of Mr. Grote, of Mr. Ward, and of Mr. Clay; and established with surpassing power and felicity that those reasonings and statements are utterly subversive of each other. As for Mr. Villiers's assertions about the character of the English farmer, and about the folly of buying

"dear bread" because we are burdened with a debt, and with an "aristocracy"—Sir Robert Peel dealt with those assertions in a way which entitles him to the thanks of the whole agricultural body.

Sir Robert's demonstration of the utter impossibility that universal freedom of trade should ever be susceptible of adoption amidst our complicated social relations, his advice to the manufacturers to try, in the first place, the efficacy of their prescriptions upon themselves, his recommendation that they should in other words, "shear the pigs" before pressing blades upon the sheep, his exposition of the absurdities of the economists in reference to the elementary principles of their science, his bitter and most happy denunciations of the policy of the cabinet his sarcastic compliments to Lord John Russell as a successful painter of Joseph Home in the character of a "political economist," all these points in Sir Robert Peel's speech of last night, when regarded merely as efforts of intellectual art, may well challenge the deepest admiration;—but when we advert to the mighty truths which Sir Robert Peel illustrated and enforced by the aid of wit and eloquence and logic of the most exquisite kind, mere admiration of the mental gifts and accomplishments of the great orator is swallowed up in gratitude for the noblesse to which those accomplishments and gifts have been directed.

The anti-corn law agitation could not fairly be pronounced to have been unproductive of general advantage, if it had only given birth to the speeches of Lord Ripon, of Sir James Graham, and of Sir Robert Peel.

EXPENSE OF TRANSPORTATION.—The expense of the transportation system is very great. There are no data for ascertaining accurately what it has cost this country. From 1787 to 1837, the outlay has been more than eight millions certainly. The account of the expenditure for New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land in 1836-7 was £488,013; the total number of convicts in the two colonies being then 60,000. The cost is annually increasing. In the sum of £488,013 the expense at Bermuda, were a small penal settlement is kept up, and of the hulks at home, are not included. The committee say that "were it not for the convict establishment New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land ought to pay the part at least of their own expenses; and where they do annual charge of maintaining well managed penitentiaries, even on the most extensive scale, including in that charge the interest of the money spent in their first establishment, could hardly equal their present expenditure."

SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEF OF THE MUSLIMS IN DREAMS.—That dreams are regarded by the Muslims as being often true warnings or indications of future

events, I have mentioned in a former note. This belief sanctioned by the prophet will be well illustrated by the following anecdote which was related to me in Cairo, shortly after the terrible plague of the year 1835, by the sheykh Muhammad Et-Fantawee, who had taken the trouble of investigating the fact, and had ascertained its truth. A tradesman, living in the quarter of El-Hanafee, in Cairo, dreamed during the plague abovementioned, that eleven persons were carried out from his house to be buried, victims of this disease. He awoke in a state of the greatest distress and alarm, reflecting that eleven was the total number of the inhabitants of his house, including himself; and that it would be vain in him to attempt, by adding one or more members to his household, to elude the decree of God, and give himself a chance of escape; so, calling together his neighbours, he informed them of his dream, and was counselled to submit with resignation to a fate so plainly foreshown, and to be thankful to God for the timely notice with which he had been mercifully favoured. On the following day, one of his children died; a day or two after, a wife; and the pestilence continued its ravages among his family until he remained in his house alone. It was impossible for him now to entertain the slightest doubt of the entire accomplishment of the warning; immediately, therefore, after the last death that had taken place among his household, he repaired to a friend at a neighbouring shop, and, calling to him several other persons from the adjoining and opposite shops, he reminded them of his dream acquainted them with its almost complete fulfilment, and expressed his conviction that he, the eleventh, should very soon die. "Perhaps," said he, "I shall die this night: I beg of you, therefore, for God's sake, to come to my house early to-morrow morning, and the next morning, and the next if necessary, and to see if I be dead, and when dead, that I am properly buried; for I have no one with me to wash and shroud me. Fail not to do me this service, which will procure you a recompence in heaven. I have bought my grave-men: you will find it in a corner of the room in which I sleep. If you find the door of the house latched, and I do not answer to your knocking, break it open." Soon after sunset he laid himself in his lonely bed, thought without any expectation of closing his eyes in sleep; for his mind was absorbed in reflection upon the awful entry into another world, and a review of his past life. As the shades of night gathered around him, he could

almost fancy that he beheld, in one faint object or another in his gloomy chamber, the dreadful person of the angel of Death; and at length he actually perceived a figure gliding in at the door, and approaching his bed. Startling in horror, he exclaimed, "Who art thou?"—and a stern and solemn voice answered, "Be silent! I am 'Azrael, the Angel of Death!" "Alas!" cried the terrified man, "I testify that there is no deity but God, and I testify that Muhammad is God's Apostle! There is no strength nor power but in God, the High! the Great! To God we belong, and to Him we must return!" He then covered himself over with his quilt, as if for protection, and lay with throbbing heart, expecting every moment to have his soul torn from him by the inexorable messengers. But moments passed away, and minutes and hours: yet without his experiencing any hope of escape; for he imagined that the angel was waiting for him to resign himself, or had left him for a while, and was occupied in receiving first the souls of the many hundred human beings who attained their predestined term in that same night, and in the same city, and the souls of the thousand who were doomed to employ him elsewhere. Day-break arrived before his sufferings terminated; and his neighbours coming according to their promise, entered his chamber, and found him still in bed; but observing that he was covered up, and motionless as a corpse, they doubted whether he were still alive, and called to him. He answered with a faint voice, "I am not yet dead; but the Angel of Death came to me in the dusk of the evening, and I expect every moment his return, to take my soul: therefore trouble me not, but see me washed and buried." "But why," said his friends, "was the street-door left unlatched?"—"I latched it," he answered, "but the Angel of Death may have opened it." "And who," they asked, "is the man in the court?" He answered, "I know of no man in the court: perhaps the angel, who is waiting for my soul, has made himself visible to you, and been mistaken, in the twilight, for a man."—"He is a thief," they said, "who has gathered together every thing in the house that he could carry away, and has been struck by the plague while doing so, and now lies dead in the court, at the foot of the stairs, grasping in his hand a silver candlestick." The master of the house, after hearing this, paused for a moment, and then throwing off his quilt, exclaimed, "Praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures! That is the eleventh, and I am safe! No doubt it was that rascal who came to me, and said that he was the Angel of Death. Praise be to God! praise be to God!"—This man survived the plague, and took pleasure in relating the above story. The thief had overheard his conversation with his neighbours, and coming to his house in the dusk, had put his shoulder to the wooden lock, and so raised the door, and displaced the latch within.—Lane's Notes to his New Translation of the Arabian Nights.

It is expected that Mr Macaulay is to succeed Mr. Cutlar Ferguson as Judge Advocate; but the Hon. Gentleman has been for some time in Italy, which probably delays his appointment.

The commercial house of Samuel Koss at Vienna, has suspended its payments.

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