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BY THOMAS LUNTON, at his office, opposite Messrs. W. Dixon & Co's

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(From the Morning Herald)

A most important discussion took place last night in the House of Lords, on the subject of the plan for the abolition of church rates. We doubt whether even the House of Commons will think of giving its sanction to the bill after the statement of the Archbishop of Canterbury and his announcement of the decided opposition of 15 bishops—almost all the bishops now in town—against the ministerial measure. At all events, we may take for granted that its ultimate success is out of the question.

The discussion was commenced by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, on presenting petitions against the abolition of church-rates, took occasion to notice the great number of petitions of the same description which had been recently poured into both Houses of parliament. He noticed this fact as an answer to the assertion that the general feeling of the country was in favour of the abolition. On the contrary he contended that the feeling against those rates was chiefly confined to towns within populous districts. With respect to the proposed measure, the right reverend prelate declared—"But when I look at the plan which has been submitted to the House of Commons, I cannot suppose that it can be believed for a moment to be of such a character; and I am surprised, nay I may say astonished, that the plan should be considered satisfactory to the clergy and to the church. When I consider the outline of it, I confess it appears to me to be a subject in its principles, and so pregnant with mischief in its consequences, that I cannot give my assent to it. It takes that property away from the church which, from time immemorial has belonged to it; and for whose benefit, I may ask? Is the rate repined at on account of any pecuniary burden? No, my lords, it is not: for the dissenter disdains to say that he feels it as a pecuniary burden; but he objects to it on another ground—that of principle; the principle of his objection being because it is a contribution to the maintenance of the established church. This, my lords, is his objection. And again—"If the object of the system, as at present exercised, be exceptionable, as is insisted by those who are opposed to it, what shall we say of the plan proposed? It is neither more nor less than degrading to the dignitaries of the church, and placing them under the management of commissioners invested with full powers of granting leases, of selling reversions, nay, of alienating the property of the church. Now, who is so blind as not to see that the effect will be (I do not say that such is the object) to degrade the dignitaries of the church, to give it the mildest term, making them mere annuitants, and to render them dependent upon the board of commissioners, the greater portion of them nominated by and under the existing government? There might come a time when the aggregate sum to be obtained by this plan might be swept away. After stating that these sentiments were not merely his own, but had been unanimously adopted at a meeting of 15 bishops, the most reverend prelate concluded by expressing his and their determination to oppose a measure fraught with such injustice, by every constitutional means in their power.

Lord Melbourne rose, evidently under excited feelings, and expressed great sorrow and regret at the statement he had just heard. He complained of the precipitancy with which the most rev. prelate had pronounced upon a measure which he (Lord Melbourne) believed to be beneficial to the church, advantageous to the country, and in every respect calculated to give satisfaction to the people. "Considering that it was a measure of peace and concord—considering that it had met with the approbation of his Majesty's government—and considering that it was calculated to put an end to a state of things which the most rev. prelate had waited until the decision of the question had been come to elsewhere, instead of now pronouncing with such precipitate haste a sen-

tence of condemnation upon it." The noble lord proceeded to express his conviction that the petitioners against the abolition of the rates laboured under great misconception. Could any man, he asked, object to the establishment of a fund for the purposes to which those rates were applicable, when by establishing such a sum, they would avoid all the tickerings and disputes which rose under the present system? "The relief that was intended to be given by the abolition of the present system of church rates was not a partial relief, or a benefit intended only to conciliate a certain class of the King's subjects. It would reach all classes—it would be conducive to the service of the state and the general interests of society. It was a great object with him to provide for the quiet, peace, and harmony of the subjects of this realm, whatever it might be to the most reverend prelate and his brethren. * * * But he assured them and the country that that announcement should not induce him to alter that course which he considered just and beneficial to the best interests of society, and he would therefore persevere."

The Bishop of London concurred in the sentiments stated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and bore testimony to the correctness with which his grace had represented the opinions of those bishops who assembled that morning to consider the proposed measure.

Earl Fitzwilliam expressed his approbation of the measure, declaring that it was calculated to promote tranquillity on this subject, and to settle the question.

The petitions were then ordered to lie on the table. We think we may almost venture to pronounce from this debate, that at the rate of the measure, and, perhaps, of the ministry, is already decided.

SPAIN.

AINHOA, MARCH 14.

I have this instant received the following important communication:—

Zugarramudi, March 14.

"General Sarsfield, after passing the night of the 11th on the plains of Irzurun, returned the next morning with the whole of his army to Pampluna, where he now remains."

From the line of St. Sebastian I have received the following advice:—

Hernani, March 13.

"The Anglo-Spaniards made a diversion early yesterday morning on Retuerta, they then manoeuvred in the direction of Oramendi, and ultimately made a sortie from Ametzagana at all points they were repulsed."

"His Majesty visited the lines this morning, and then returned to Audoain at two o'clock."

General O'raa passed through St. Jean de Luz last night for Bayonne, en route for Arragon. The General's opinion of Evans is anything but flattering; in conversation with a friend, he observed—"Evans may be a good diplomatist, but he is no soldier, and it is degrading to the national character that 8,000 Spaniards should be placed under the command of a stranger, and that stranger, from his want of capacity, dishonouring the arms of her Majesty."

The reports spread yesterday of the entry of Espartero into Durango, Guernica, and Galdicano turn out to be a mere fabrication, letters having been received from Bilbao, dated the 12th. At this date, Espartero was still in that city, nor were there any signs of his marching out.

I feel happy in being able to send you the following highly interesting letter from Valencia, and two bulletins from Cañera.—The former is written by a Christiano authority, and consequently, as regards the Carlists, not overdrawn, gives some important information relative to the Geront of the Christianos at Siete Aguas:—

Valencia, Feb. 21.

* The mail of Friday only reached us on

Monday, and although I am without any news from you, I shall still write in the hope that at all events my letters may reach you. Saturday I wrote to you; but I afterwards learned that the mail was obliged to return to the depot after it left this city. Every boat was out on the alert, and the most alarming reports were spread. Between four and five o'clock in the afternoon the whole city was in movement, it having been reported that the division commanded by de Grades had been destroyed. This news was, unfortunately, soon confirmed by the arrival of a great many wounded, on mules, in carts, and on foot, and groups of flying soldiers. These poor fellows, one and all cried out that their chiefs were traitors; they cursed and accused them of betraying them. All that night the gate of Cuarte was left open to facilitate the entry of the wounded, the fugitive soldiers, and the peasants. The next morning (Sunday) three proclamations were placarded on the walls of the city, one from the military commandant ad interim, the other from the civil governor, and the third from the provincial deputacion. The authorities acted with great prudence in publishing that which could not be concealed, thus preventing public anxiety from becoming too violent, and ultimately disturbing the repose of the town. They succeeded, and all remained quiet.—The following you may consider as an official detail of that unfortunate affair:—I must first inform you that the Carlist division under the orders of Forcadell left Urduliz a few days since, taking the direction of La Mancha, evidently with the intention of seizing on a quantity of clothes sent from Madrid for the troops in this kingdom. Forcadell, on reaching Albeete, learned that the convoy had retired on Las Penas de San Pedro, and the Carlist chief Palillos was in pursuit of it. He also received advice that the division of De Grades was at Bunol. Forcadell now resolved on surprising this column, and for this purpose he, during the afternoon and night of Friday, with the whole of his division, made a march of fourteen leagues, and approached Siete Aguas on Saturday at break of day.

Colonel Crenet, who commanded Grades division, (he having sent in his resignation a few days previous,) hearing of the approach of the enemy, marched out of Bunol at break of day, and advanced towards Las Cabillas. Forcadell was marching in the same direction, not being allowed his troops to retrace at Siete Aguas, although they had made a long march. About seven o'clock in the morning the two divisions met face to face, and the Carlists, being in the minority, were obliged to retreat. Forcadell only pursued the enemy for a short distance, and then returned to Bunol. The Carlists, who were surrounded on all sides by at least 5,000 infantry and 600 cavalry. The regiment of the Queen was the first to receive the charge of the enemy, and as it took the charge, Colonel Crenet was one of the first amongst the killed.—The troops being thus without a commander, the battalions flew in all directions, and in their flight threw disorder into the ranks of the regiments of Centa and Sayce. The enemy took advantage of the confusion, killed and wounded as many as they pleased with the bayonet and stones, not to lose time in loading their muskets; it is for this reason that most of the wounds are mortal. It is to our brave cavalry that the lives of some of our brave soldiers are due; they supported the infantry a sufficient time to enable many to escape; without them all would have been lost. The Carlists pursued our troops as far as Bunol; they made 400 prisoners, and killed 600 men of a column composed of 2,000 infantry and 300 cavalry, the pride and protection of the kingdom. The men were brave old soldiers,

and had been on the field from the very commencement of the war.

"Some officers who escaped, but wounded, declared that they had no conception that Forcadell possessed so much military knowledge, and that he manoeuvred his troops with great judgment."

"The Carlists got possession of a considerable booty; for, independent of the mules which they took from our column, and of many horses, they also took the money chests of the different regiments, a great many waggons laden with munitions, and provisions, and also the flour bags, in some of which was money and valuable jewels."

Forcadell having interrogated several of the prisoners and deserters, learned from them that had it not been for their officers and sergeants, they, one and all, would have deserted, and thus have avoided the miseries of the day. Forcadell having ascertained that this statement was exact, ordered all officers whom he had made prisoners, to the gates of Bunol, to be shot. Forcadell asserted that Colonel Crenet was amongst the number, and that he was not killed at the commencement of the action.

"Much might be said in regard to the importance, at this present time, of the assurance you that it is the general opinion that in no part of Spain, not even in Navarre, had there been so serious a disaster as this, and the result so disastrous. It commenced at seven o'clock in the morning, and at eight all was over.—Our losses ceased to exist. Our young troops were discouraged, and the Carlists, proud of their victory, will make themselves masters of the whole kingdom. The reports sent to the governor of Alcala and San Esteban, are very distressing, and thousands of people flock into this city. The convents of St. Anne and St. Fulgencio have been arranged as a refuge for those not able to procure a resting-place."

SAN SEBASTIAN, MARCH 2.

General Evans finds himself at this moment in one of the most embarrassing and vexatious situations that can possibly be conceived. He sees his troops burning with impatience to take the field; yet he cannot venture to indulge them, while the Carlists have in front of him a force of nearly 20,000 men, and both Sarsfield and Espartero remain obstinately inactive. The James Watt steamer arrived at Passages on Wednesday evening, from Santander, with 600 Spanish troops, belonging to the same division, which had previously come into San Sebastian. According to the report of Capt. Jamieson, the latest accounts from Bilbao represent Espartero as firmly resolved not to move until he had secured for his army an ample supply of provisions for two months. In fact immobility is the only principle of action, or rather of non-action, for which the Christiano Generals appear ambitious to distinguish themselves, though they see their opponents setting them a totally different example. The Carlists are indefatigable in their exertions. They work night and day, and though the weather was now extremely severe here, sleet, snow, and rain falling at frequent intervals, yet their labors are not for one moment suspended. Capt. McKellar, who commanded the outpost on the morning when the five unhappy men of the 6th regiment of the legion, were taken prisoners by the Carlists, and afterwards shot, has been released from arrest. The general order issued on the occasion, after the usual formalities, proceeds in the following terms of advice:—"It is directed at the same time, that Capt. McKellar, be reprimanded in the strongest manner for the extreme indiscretion he committed on the 25th inst., while on outlying picket, in permitting or directing men belonging to his picket to leave their post for the purpose of collecting wood beyond the outposts. It is contrary to the regulations of every army that men should leave their posts under such or similar pretence, and the cruel manner in which the enemy treat the prisoners that fall into their hands, belonging to this force, whether armed or unarmed, renders this irregularity in the present service, the