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GRAND BANQUET

Sir Robert Peel at Glasgow

The excitement occasioned by the arrival of Sir Robert Peel in the commercial metropolis of the North, continues still unabated—and the town is filling rapidly, notwithstanding the severity of the weather, and the very general prevalence of influenza, which, it was at one time apprehended, would deter many from leaving their homes. The Right Hon. Baronet visited the Royal Exchange yesterday, where a large crowd assembled for the purpose of having a sight of him. He was loudly cheered by his Tory adherents, which had the effect of calling forth a few observations, in which he chiefly confined himself to the architectural beauty and splendour of the edifice in which he was, and the venerable University which he had just left—the one famous as a seat of learning, and the other illustrative of the great commercial enterprise and skill of the city of Glasgow. The Right Hon. Baronet left the room amid the loud cheers of those assembled, who caused considerable destruction among the furniture, gas pipes, glass globes, by unceremoniously mounting the tables, in their anxiety to obtain a peep at the distinguished stranger.

THE DINNER

As our readers and the public generally are already aware, took place in a pavilion erected for the express purpose, on the east side of Buchan-street, and the following description, which we copy from the "Glasgow Herald of Friday, will afford our readers some idea of the plan on which it has been arranged:—Last night we had the pleasure of seeing this magnificent Hall lighted up, the tables being covered and partly victualled for 3,435 persons. We think it may be said with safety, that never before, in this country, has there been seen such a Hall, except perhaps, that of Westminster Abbey, at the Coronation of the late King. As a temporary building, however, got up in the course of three or four weeks, it is without a parallel in Great Britain—whether we consider it in its dimensions, its classical devices, its elegant and well-proportioned parts, the splendour with which it is illuminated, or its commodiousness for the purposes intended. The quantity of cloth stuff used by these eminent upholsterers, the Messrs. James White and Son, in covering the roof, the tables, seats, &c., is about eight thousand yards of all descriptions; and the gas lustres (two of which are exceedingly beautiful) contain upwards of three thousand burners. The gallery, from which by far the finest view of the Hall is got, is supported by 14 imitation sienna marble columns, with Corinthian capitals—the roof being upheld by ten columns of a similar description, 22 feet in height. The decorative painting has been executed in a very superior manner by Messrs. B. G. & Co., the great west end being divided into three departments of massive Egyptian pillars, painted in relief. In the centre compartment, behind the bench where Sir Robert Peel and the most distinguished part of the company are to sit, is an immense rock, on which is founded the British Constitution in a pyramidal form, a little time worn from the blasts it has stood, and on which the "British Constitution" are emblazoned in gold letters. On the top of this pyramid is seen the base of an obelisk, bearing the inscription of "King," also in gilded letters. In the right compartment is another pyramid founded also on a rock, on which is the word "Lords" in emblazoned gold letters. The left compartment contains a similar pyramid, with "Commons." The whole, from its great magnitude, has a very grand and imposing effect. The front of the gallery is painted in panels of crimson and stone colour styles, which, with the columns in imitation of marble, give the area a chaste and light appearance. The front of the bench is panelled in crimson and yellow mouldings, that stand out in bold relief against the sombre column of the rock behind.

About four o'clock the company began to arrive, and notwithstanding the vast crowds assembled round the pavilion, the arrangements were such as to afford immediate and easy ingress to all.

Sir Robert Peel entered the room about a quarter past five, and the vast multitude within the building instantly rose, and received him with loud cheers, clapping of hands, and waving of handkerchiefs, the band striking up.

"See, the conquering hero comes."

There were a few hisses from the remote corner of a gallery, but they were drowned in the louder and more general shouts of acclamation with which the Right Hon. Baronet was greeted on his entrance.

The Chair was taken by HENRY MONTEITH, of Carstairs, Esq., and on his right sat the distinguished guest of the evening.

After several preliminary toasts had been drunk,

The CHAIRMAN said—My lords and gentlemen, I now rise to propose to you what may with propriety be called the toast of the day.—(Cheers.)—I am sure I am unequal to the task which has been imposed upon me, but which I am proud I have been required to perform.—(Hear.)—As regards inaccuracy my mind is relieved, when I consider the subject of the toast I have to propose to you and that it does not require a long harangue to recommend it to your warm reception.—(Loud cheers.)—Sir Robert Peel has been so long known to you, that the history of the last twenty years may be said to have defined his character, and displayed him to you a great statesman, a pure patriot, and an honest man, and to recommend him to you I need say no more than this.—(Hear and cheers) History recommends him to you as a statesman, who has devoted his great talents to the service of his country.—(Loud cheers.)—I shall say no more then, but that I am sincerely thankful that to me has fallen the honour of proposing to you the health of Sir Robert Peel.—(Loud and continued cheers, which lasted for several minutes.)

Sir ROBERT PEEL rose, and the cheering and acclamations were again renewed, and kept up with the greatest enthusiasm for several minutes. He said—Gentlemen, I thank you, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the kind and affectionate reception you have given to my name. Excuse me, if for the purpose of returning thanks, I make use of the most simple and familiar phrases. They are imperfect expressions of my feelings, but they are better suited to express them, than the trite, studied and complimentary forms of expression which may be studied for ordinary occasions.—What a heart must I have, if I can have witnessed what has passed in Glasgow within the last five days, without deep emotion? Unconnected with this country by birth, I have been placed in competition with a distinguished Scotchman for a high academic distinction. I have been placed in it by a triumphant majority—by the generous, the unsought, the unsolicited confidence of the youth of Scotland.—(Loud cheers.) I have seen that choice confirmed by the deliberate judgment of men of maturer age, engaged in the pursuits of business and professional life. (Cheers.) This very day have I received the congratulations, on my appointment, from some of the working classes of this great city.—(Applause)—expressed in language that would do honour to men of the highest education. I have seen these feelings so wide spreading and so intense, that they disdained to be compressed within the limit of any pre-existing edifice, and they called forth from the ground, as by the stroke of an enchanter's wand, this magnificent and unparalleled fabric.—(Hear.) I have been present here—I have heard its foundations shaken, and its roof almost rent by your enthusiastic applause; and do you think I can condescend to look out for ingenious forms of expression, for the purpose of giving vent to feelings which almost overpower me? (Loud and continued cheering.) I said that I was unconnected with Scotland by birth—I hope I did not say that I was a stranger. No—I am not a

stranger.—(Loud applause.) If the long exercise of power in Scotland, if the administration of justice, if intercourse with her civil and religious institutions, and above all, if love for her name, and admiration for her character, and cordial interest for her welfare, entitle a man to repudiate the name of stranger—then I am not a stranger in Glasgow.—(Cheers.) No, Gentlemen. When my education was completed, I burned with a wish to see Scotland. I came here to this city, and I confess to you, that although the interval is short in the history of nations, I could not have conceived it possible that in that interval such progress could have been made in the population, in the wealth, and in the prosperity of this magnificent city.—(Great cheering)—pouring, as it does, into the revenue, in one branch alone, greater treasures than continental nations possess for the whole of the expenditure. I came here—I wished to see something of Scotland which I could not have seen from hasty glimpses from the windows of a luxurious post-coach. I wanted to see your attitudes and manners of life, apart from the magnificent and hospitable castles of your Nobility and Gentry.—(Cheers.)—Yes, in Glasgow I acquired a faithful steed, and I traversed on horseback, or on foot, almost the whole of the country from this to Inverness.—(Cheers) Gentlemen, bear with me, excuse me if I indulge in honest exultation.—(Cheers)—excuse me if I say in this Society of Scotchmen, that I think I have seen more of your native country than some of those whom I am now addressing. (Cheers.) I have read the map of Scotland in the scale of nature from the summits of Ben Nevis and Ben Lomond. (Loud cheers.) I visited that island from which savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. (Loud cheers) Yes, amid the ruins of Iona, I abjured that frigid philosophy that would conduct us unmoved over any ground, however dignified by wisdom, bravery or virtue—I stood on the shores of Staffa—I have seen the temple not built with human hands—I have seen the mighty swellings of the ocean—the pulsations of the great Atlantic. I have explored its inmost recesses, and I have heard those swellings, nobler than any that ever pealed from human organs. I have lived on the banks of the Spey two autumns, and I want no guide in the mountains and shores of Balenoch.—(Great cheers.) I could find my way from Corriarich to Loch Logan.—(Cheers.) I have climbed your mountain sides with no companion but a Highland shepherd. Many an hour have I passed listening to his simple anecdotes, and artless views of human life. I have learned to admire, by personal intercourse, a proud and independent spirit, chastened by a natural courtesy. (Cheers.) I have seen him with intelligence apparently above his condition, but with no fastidiousness but that which taught him patience under his privations—confidence in his exertions—and submission to the law—loyalty to the King. (Cheers.) And when I have seen that, my earnest prayer has been, that to his children, and his children's children might be preserved that system of education which founded moral obligation under the revealed will of God. (Great cheering.) My earnest wish has been that the circumstances of Scotland, with reference to religious dissent, might long enable them to enjoy that proud, and I believe, peculiar privilege, of having a system of education enforced by the law, but in connection with the Established Church. And when I joined that man in public worship, and heard the sublime truths, and pure doctrines of her common faith enjoined and enforced, according to different rights, think you I have adverted to distinctions and a point of form? (Cheers.) Think you that I have troubled myself with questions of church discipline, or church Government? (Great cheering.) No, but with a wish as cordial and hearty as you can entertain.—(Continued cheering.)—I have deprecated the arrival of that day, if ever it should arrive, when men in authority should not be ashamed to support the National church of Scotland. (Hear, hear, and cheer.) To extend its ministrations, and to advance its

good, but do all they can to extend religious intolerance. (Hear, hear.) Gentlemen you respond to that statement. (Loud and continued cheers.) Come then, let us devote ourselves not merely to the purposes of festivity—let us improve the present opportunity to the public advantage. (Cheers.) Let us see if we are agreed as to the danger to which the Constitution is exposed; then let us see if we can join heart and hand in support of the resolution you have adopted. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I have been informed that there are many persons here present who entertain a different opinion from myself with respect to the Reform of the House of Commons. (Hear.) I sincerely hope that this is the case. (Cheers.) You may safely think that I am not here going to defend any, by reviving battles that have been concluded. (Cheers.) If we can agree to present dangers, and unite in principle, I shall not revive discussions that are past, for we might as well in the face of the enemy fight over again the battles of Blenheim or the field of Eddenden. (Hear and cheer.) I say I want not to mount any of these conversions; but I say this, that if you adhere to the principles which they professed in 1850, this is the place in which they should make their appearance. You consented to the Reform bill, to which you were expressly invited to assent, in the speech which was delivered by your then representative, on condition that you should acknowledge the principles upon which the Constitution was founded. Let there be no mistake on this point. (Loud cheers) I see the necessity for widening the foundation on which the defence of the British Constitution, and the religious establishment must rest. (Loud cheers) I ask, though I have no right to ask for any confession of error, or even for any change of opinion—all I ask of you is, to adhere to the principles upon which the Reform bill was advocated; and if you do, then will you combine with me firmly for the defence of the Constitution of the country. (Continued cheers) I have now to recommend to you, said his Majesty, the important question of reform to your earnest and most attentive consideration, confident that in any measure, you may prepare for its adjustment, you will carefully adhere to the acknowledged principles of the constitution by which the prerogative of the crown—the authority of both Houses of Parliament (cheers) and the rights and liberties of the people are maintained. Did his Majesty rest satisfied with that? Did he say adopt reform—apply reform to the House of Commons—but apply it only upon the acknowledged principles of the Constitution? He said that—but he said more. He invited you to consent to reform for certain objects, and amongst those objects expressly was this—"In recommending reform to your consideration, it was my object to give additional security to the other institutions of our land." (Cheers.) Now, Gentlemen, if these were your principles—if you supported earnestly and conscientiously Reform in the House of Commons, because you believed that you were resisting an encroachment which had been made upon the very representation of your country (Cheers.) if you thought Reform was in conformity with the acknowledged principles of the Constitution—if you believed with Lord Grey, that by making the reform larger and more extensive you would discountenance other extravagant propositions endangering the Constitution. I not only say you may be here without hearing from me one word that could pain your feelings but I say upon you and not upon me it is incumbent to vindicate your rights and not mine—the stigma of being inconsistent with the safety of the British Constitution. (Cheers.) I have endeavoured to extract what was good—and mitigate as much evil as I could. But, I say, if you adhere to your principles, you ought not to leave to me, and those who act with me, the defence of the Reform bill. You naturally say, that although you are determined to resist further changes which endanger the Constitution, yet you adhere to your opinions, that the progress of improvement ought not to be suspended—that abuses ought to be revo-