

POSTPONEMENT OF THE TRIAL OF REV. J. R. STEPHENS.

(From the Manchester Courier.) The trial of the Rev. J. R. Stephens has been postponed. The power and dignity of government has been changed for trembling cowardice and shuffling meanness.

The case stands thus. A minister of state took a provincial tour, and in a large and wealthy town was entertained at dinner by its municipal functionaries. After dinner, the said minister's health was proposed and duly honoured; whereupon he rose and delivered a speech, in the course of which he let slip certain ill-defined opinions as to the liberty of the subject, and as to the right of Her Majesty's lieges to assemble together, and give free expressions to their sentiments.

We have stated the case of Mr. Stephens. If the government felt assured that the charges preferred against him are just, and strictly within the spirit of the law, how happens it that they will not allow the law to take its course? It has been stated to us that Mr. Stephens subpoenaed Lord John Russell and several and several of his colleagues on his trial, which he had a perfect right to do, in common with every subject of the realm.

There is no doubt in our minds that Mr. Stephens is guilty of the charges imputed to him; and we shall not so far forget our respect, as well for the laws as for the maintenance of peace and good order, as to undertake his defence. But if condemnation is to take place, let it be equally shared between the guilty parties.

sedition; but it is clear, by his speech at Liverpool, he encouraged the commission of excesses, whether wilfully or not, it is not for us to say, which, in his official capacity, he has since been called upon to put down by the strong arm of the law. If he had been an honest man and an upright minister, he would have foregone all personal considerations in the determination to uphold the dignity of the laws.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 21.

EXECUTIONS IN CANADA.

Mr. O'CONNELL begged to ask the under-secretary for the colonies, whether her Majesty's government had received any account of 34 persons having been hanged in Canada recently; and he wished also to know whether it was the intention to have these executions continued?

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, no information had been received at the Colonial office with regard to the accounts which had appeared in the newspapers of several persons having been executed in Upper and Lower Canada in addition to those which had already been stated to the house. From some circumstances, for which he was not able to account, the Great Western, steam ship, did not bring any despatches from the governors of Upper and Lower Canada, and therefore no information had been received. With regard to the hon. and learned member's second question, as to whether it was the intention of her Majesty's government to take steps to stop those executions, he begged to say that on every occasion when that most painful subject had been adverted to by Lord Normandy and himself, in their communication with the governors of these colonies, no opportunity had been lost of impressing upon their minds a strong feeling of the advisableness and propriety of confining the exercise of capital punishment within the narrowest possible limits, due regard being had to protection of the lives and properties of her Majesty's subjects.

Very great activity prevails in the ordnance department at the present time. The gun business has not been so brisk since the battle of Waterloo, and good workmen are with difficulty obtained. Very extensive contracts (indeed the largest ever known) have been lately entered into, for the supply of military and naval stores of all descriptions. Large quantities of stores have been lately

shipped off from the Tower for the colonies and various parts of the united kingdom.

Among the exports of the principality of Coburg we find enumerated "sausages and livers of geese."

The Archbishop of Poson, (Darin) has been sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment in a fortress, for his opposition to the decrees of the Prussian government.

Mr. Edward O'Connell, who was elected secretary to the poor law commissioners in Limerick, is also secretary to the precursor society for Limerick and Liberties.—Limerick Chronicle.

A return published in the Monitor shows that the importation of foreign grain into France has been nearly as much in the month of January in the present year as in the twelve months that preceded it.

On Mr. Ward, M. P. for this borough, being requested by the Radical Association to support the people's charter, the hon. gentleman wrote to say he could not comply with their request, having made up his mind to give it his most strenuous opposition.—Sheffield Iris.

It is generally reported in London, that Lord John Russell will retire at Easter. If this be the case, Lord Morpeth will succeed him as ministerial leader in the Commons—that is, if the Cabinet can survive his resignation.

CONTRACT FOR STEAMERS TO HALIFAX.—The contract for conveying H. M. mails from this country to North America, has been taken by the "Mining Association" for seven years, at £55,000 per annum. The steamers are to start once a fortnight; but it appears that Falmouth is not to be the port from whence they are to sail. This contract is to commence on the 1st of May.—Falmouth Express.

ASTOUNDING, IS TRUE!—We have heard of a project in contemplation so audacious that we can scarcely credit the report. It is said that Lord Plunket being no longer able to hold the Irish seals, a bill is to be introduced, rendering Roman Catholics eligible to the office of chancellor, in order that the seals may be conferred upon Mr. Daniel O'Connell! The enunciation of such a proposition is monstrous, but it is not to be disregarded on that account. We are almost come to that state of paradoxical wickedness in government that, one may say "credo quia impossibile"—the more incredibly atrocious any act, the more likely to be perpetrated by the present men. We pray of the country to attend to this matter: if men see any attempt to tamper with the few feeble securities reserved in 1839, they will then know what to think.—Standard.

RAILWAY AND STAGE COACH TRAVELLING.—Considerable interest has been excited by the appearance of a document just published by order of the House of Commons, being a return of the mileage and composition duties on railway and stage carriages respectively, in the years ended the 5th of January, 1837, 1838, and 1839. It appears from this parliamentary paper, that 4,800,000 less persons travelled by stage coaches in 1838 than in 1836, and 14,400,000 more persons by railway in the same periods.

AFTER a debate of five nights, the House of Commons on Monday came to a division on the corn question, when Mr. Villiers's motion was rejected by 342 to 195, being a majority of 147. On all hands the course taken by Ministers is regarded as most shuffling and contemptible; the popular party perceive that the fawning pretensions of sympathy bestowed upon them are but a tub to the whale; and the landed interest is more than ever confirmed in distrust and detestation of Liberalism.

Lord Ebrington will hold his first levee as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, at the Castle, during the Easter holidays. His lordship is now in Devonshire, on a visit to his venerable father, whence he will return in a few days.

INCREASE OF THE NATIONAL DEBT.—At the revolution in 1689 it was £664,263; at the accession of Queen Anne, in 1702, £16,394,702; at the accession of George the First, 1714, £54,145,363; at the accession of George the Second, 1727, £52,092,238; at the commencement of the American war, 1775, £128,583,635; at the commencement of the French war, 1792, £239,350, 148; on the 5th of January, 1787, when the English and Irish Exchequers were consolidated, £848, 282,477; in the first of Victoria, 1838, £764,704,057.

CRIME IN PORTUGAL.—The following is an extract from a statistical table, showing the crimes perpetrated in Portugal and its insular possessions during the past year, 1838, which has been published in Lisbon. It contains cases of rebellions, 627; destruction weapons, 106; resisting legal authority, 281;

burglaries, 76; escaping from prison, 18; riots, 38; counterfeiting coin, 3; abuse of the liberty of the press, 19; forgeries, 48; infanticide, 20; suicides, 10; poisoning, 18; larceny, 8; pilfering, 250; street quarrels, 3,218; incendiarism, 23; petty offences, 32; indecent exposures, 34; perjuries, 47; sacrilege, 73; desertions, 592; robberies, 3,067; murders, 1,776.

THE SQUATS.—On Tuesday evening, two strangers alighted at the Star Hotel, in company with Lord Lovel, from the top of the Inverness mail. They were completely attired in the Highland costume, and richly accoutred. They were of handsome stature, and apparently athletic frame with thick bushy moustachions and whiskers. Both are scions of the unfortunate royal race of Stuart—Charles Edward Stuart, and Sobieski Stuart—grandsons of the last Pretender of that line to the throne of these realms. After dining here, they proceeded to Edinburgh by the defiance coach. They seem well suited to our Scottish climate—for, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, the pillage and hose were only shield from the "Norlan blast." The strangers attracted much attention.—Perth paper.

THE STAIR WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 1839.

To Correspondents.

We can by no means give insertion to the communication of "A GUARDIAN": he appears to have taken for granted, that which every other person has set down as a malicious fabrication. Nobody having the slightest knowledge of the character of the Reverend Gentleman alluded to,—his firm Church of England principles, love of consistency, honesty and good faith,—would or could suspect him of such politico-religious fickleness—fickleness did we say! We dare not put upon paper the term applicable to such conduct.—But our Correspondent may rest assured that the report is entirely false. No such unhalloved desertion as that alluded to will ever take place; at least this is our conviction.

THE NORTHERN CIRCUIT COURT opened here on Saturday the 20th ult. agreeably to Proclamation. In all probability the present Term will be a busy one. We understand that several intricate and important cases are likely to be brought forward. Be it so: we have a Judge on the Bench that knows his duty.

The Protestant Editor of a certain Newfoundland Newspaper has recently informed his readers that persons of his own persuasion are "altogether mistaken in their road" when they read his articles in defence of Protestant doctrine! Poor wretch! We, though the *thamb-sores* could hardly have extorted such a declaration.

COMMERCE WITH PORTUGAL.

The following correspondence will show the manner in which the commerce with Portugal is treated by our Liberal allies, and how the interests of our merchants are sustained by the British Ministers:—

"TO MR. WILLIAM SMITH, HER MAJESTY'S CONSUL, LISBON.

"Sir—We beg leave to bring under notice and to call your attention to a recent decree of the Government, ordering a continuation of the additional duty on cod fish, though legally that duty or tax ceased on the 6th of this month; and against the enforcement of such an illegal act of Government we would appeal to Her Majesty's Minister at this Court through your medium.

It will, no doubt, be in recollection that the Government in 1837 applied to the Cortes for means of increasing the revenue, leaving special application to the Junta or Board of Public Credit, and the Cortes in complying with the call of Government enacted the imposition of additional duties on several articles, amongst them on cod fish, for the precise period of only twelve months, that period to commence two months subsequent to the publication of the act.

The act therefore ceased to have legal force from the 6th of this month, as already stated, when the twelve months expired; but the Government issued a decree under date of the 29th ult., ordering the continuation of the tax, and that, waiting the determination of the Cortes, it should be received into deposit.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the illegality of such a proceeding, nor it may (we should hope) be fairly presumed will the Cortes sanction the act of the Government, because such a sanction would recognise a retrospective principle.

The Cortes, mindful of the necessity of not surprising mercantile transactions in the midst of their operations, allowed, as you will observe, a period of two months from publication before the additional duties were to take effect, and in the present instance not one moment has been allowed by Government, of which we might justly complain, if their act had even been legal.

Our Newfoundland correspondents were led to believe, from advices sent from this, the great part of December, that either the additional tax would really cease, or at all events, if renewed, that a sufficient time would, as heretofore, be allowed, and no doubt they will act on those advices.

One vessel has already arrived here from Newfoundland, fish-laden, after the period of the legal cessation of the tax, and meeting the decree of government, was obliged to proceed in search of

another... follow and find them... Protection to the inter... which are seriously affect... we complain, compels a... presentation, and we tru... and de Waldren, Her M... Court, will deem it a cu... and early application...

"We have the..."

"British Consul..."

"Gentlemen,—I beg... I lost no time in forw... you transmitted to me... consideration of Her M... Court, and I am requ... state that the legality... forms the subject of... decided when the ques... the Government of all... without the authority... comes under the consi... His Lordship lik... information as to the... correspondents in N... believe that the exist... not be renewed, as oth... the year; and more... have received any... any responsible functi... And, in concluding... surprise that gentlem... affairs of the comm... signed the representa... been led to expect t... amount of debilitati... but too notorious... I have the honou... most obedient humble...

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