HOUSE OF COMMONS.

GOVERNMENT MEASURES FOR IMPROVING AFFAIRS IN THE CRIMEA.

Lord Palmerston stated the circumstances which had led to the late changes in the Ministry, and that the correspondence between Lord Derby and himself, with respect to the formation of a Government, had been incorrectly stated by him in the other House. He had declined taking office under Lord Derby, after consulting Lord Landsdowne on the subject, because he did not think, by accepting the proposal, he should give to such a Government the strength which the noble earl seemed to think his acceptance would afford. Her Majesty then sent for Lord John Russell, who had done him the honor of going to him, and he at once said that, feeling impressed with the full importance of the crisis in which the country stood, he was willing to give every assistance in his power, without reserve. But Lord J. Russell having failed, her Majesty, on Sunday evening, had been pleased to send for him (Lord Palmerston) and on Tuesday, he was able to report his success in forming an administration. He considered himself happy in having the valuable assistance of Mr. Gladstone and Sir James Graham in his ministry. He would not consent to wait the tardy result of Mr. Roebuck's committee. The only ground on which he asked the House to reject it was, that the Government themselves intended to perform the duty which was to be assigned to that committee. The noble lord proceeded to state the intentions of the new Government. The Secretary of the Admiralty had appointed a Board to superintend the transport service. A commission was now going to be sent out to the Crimea, composed of three civilians, who would have ample power to amend the sanitary condition of the hospitals, the camp, and the ships. (Hear, hear,) Many complaints had been made of the system of the Commissariat department; to rectify this, a commission is going out, at the head of which Sir John M'Neile would be placed. They would examine into their defects and make the necessary improvements in the commissariat departments. The Quartermaster-General's and Adjutant-General's departments would be removed from the authority of Lord Raglan, and placed under Major-General Simpson. An hospital was to be established at Smyrna under civilians solely. Lord Panmure was going to remodel the medical department at home, and he would also present a bill to enable her Majesty to enlist as soldiers men somewhat older than the present limit, and for a shorter period than the present fixed. To facilitate the transport in the Crimea, arrangements would be immediately made to collect animals in Asia Minor for the service of the army. Since the present Government had been in office, all these things had been done or were doing, and he trusted the House would wait for the result of these improvements, before proceeding with the select committee. The duty of a Ministtry, however, was to make every effort which could honorably and safely be made for putting an end to the war by a treaty of peace. Austria and Russia had agreed upon the basis upon which negociations should be commenced, and it was the duty of the British Government to see whether peace could be obtained on just and honorable terms. For this purpose, Lord J. Russell would proceed to Vienna early next week; he would pass through Paris for the purpose of consulting the French Government, and through Berlin for the purpose of consulting the Prussian Government. If he failed in his mission, the country would feel that there was no other course to pursue, but to go on with the war, and he was convinced that the nation would support with alacrity a Government which, having endeavoured to procure peace and failed, was determined to carry on the war with vigour. They, therefore threw themselves on the generous support of Parliament and the country, which he was confident they would not have to ask for in vain.

Mr. Disraeli defended the course taken by Lord Derby, who, he remarked, had been influenced by only one consideration, and that was, the expediency of procuring, in the present emergency, a powerful Goverment. Lord Palmerston had, he continued, thought proper to eulogzie two members of his Cabinet whose administrative abilities had certainly not been shewn by results. The noble lord had better, in his opinion, have been solemnly silent, than to recommend himself to the confidence of Parliament, or the assistance of men who had brought on the country very great, and now universally acknowledged calamities, and who had had been censured by the House of Commons. The improvements mentioned by Lord Palmerston, so far from being a reason against the committee proposed by Mr. Roebuck, was a censure upon the late Government, who had so long neglected, what they were informed were necessary and important changes. He urged in support of Mr. Roebuck's committtee, that one of the finest armies that had ever left this country had been destroyed, not by the sword of the enemy, but by means so mysterious, that a most experienced statesman had confessed and announced in the House, that he could not understand it. It was his intention in every way to support the decision of the House. He was in favor for political inquiry into the condition of the army before Sebastopol, and the conduct of the authorities who were entrusted with the arrangements for carrying on the war. The mission of Lord John Russell would meet with the satisfaction of the country, because every one felt, that no one who occupied the position of the noble lord would ever consent to terms of peace, which were unworthy of the country, and which would not accomplish that which had compelled us to resort to force of arms; and Mr. Disraeli assured Lord Palmerston, that he would receive the assistance of the country in the prosecution of the war, though the members of the opposition could not offer more assistance than they had given to Lord Aberdeen's Administration. In conclusion, he expressed a hope, that although the same individuals held office in a new form, they had changed in a fortnight from continual blunders to extreme excellence.

Mr. Roebuck said, that the committee which he intended to move on Thursday next had already been granted by the House, and the only argument urged against it by Lord Palmerston was, that there was a new Administration. They had shuffled the cards, but they had got the same hands. He supposed, that their qualities had not changed within the last fortnight, when the House declared, that they were unfit to hold office. He should therefore, on Thursday next, move for the committee, believing that he should be aiding Lord Palmerston in remodelling the institutions of this country, and enforcing energy and vigour into the Administration.

The following remarkable statement appears in a daily paper:—"The public will learn, we apprehend, both with surprise and indignation a statement which has been communicated to us in a manner which does not permit us to doubt its accuracy. The vacant office of Chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster was intended by Lord Palmerston for the Earl of Shaftesbury. It was actually offered by the Premier to the noble earl, and was accepted by him. It was offered with a seat in the cabinet attached, and Lord Shaftesbury had actually assented to the wish of the Prime Minister that he should join his administration, with possession of the seals of the duchy. After the arrangement had been, as it was thought, finally concluded, it is confidently stated that Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Sidney Herbert remonstrated in the strongest terms against it. They assigned as their reason the incompatibility of the well-known opinions of the noble earl upon religious questions with their own views upon such subjects, and threatened resignation, if the appointments were persisted in. Lord Palmerston was compelled to yield; and after the appointment had been actually made, it was cancelled, in obedience to the Puseyite tendencies of the two right honourable gentlemen who now rule the cabinet, over which Lord Palmerston has condescended nominally to preside. We leave the rejection of Lord Shaftesbury, when chosen by the Premier, together with the nomination of Mr. Frederick Peel, as conclusive proofs of the influences, to which the govenrment of the country is handed over in the new cabinet arrangements.

Upon the formation of the Government last week, no definite arrangement was made with respect to the Secretaryships of State for the Home and Colonial Departments, it being uncertain which of those offices would be filled by Sir George Grey, and which by Mr. Sidney Herbert. It has now been decided that Mr. Sidney Herbert will be the Colonial Secretary, while Sir George Grey takes the Home Department.

DESTRUCTION BY FIRE OF THE SCREW STEAM-SHIP MAURITIUS.—We regret to announce the total loss by fire yesterday (Friday) morning, at Southampton, of the fine screw steam-ship Mauritius, engaged for the last seven or eight months in the transport service in the Black Sea. The fire broke out at half-past five a.m., while the vessel was in the graving dock undergoing repairs, (having recently arrived at Southampton with sick and wounded soldiers from the Crimea,) and before eleven a. m. was totally consumed. Shortly after half-past ten o'clock, the flames communicated with the gunpowder, of which about a quarter of a ton was on board, causing a fearful explosion, and completing her destruction. The wind being light prevented the fire extending to the other shipping of the port. There is some suspicion that the fire was the work of an incendiary, bad feeling having existed among the crew. The ill-fated vessel belonged to the General Screw Steamship Company.

The *Corriere Italiano* of the 2d instant states that "Holland has concluded an offensive and defensive treaty with France and England."

AUSTRALIA.

From the Melbourne Argus of the 23d Nov.

We take the opportunity of forwarding a report upon the condition and progress of this colony.

To those who have watched the course of events in this country, as recorded from time to time in our summaries, it must have become evident that a remarkable and, on the whole, a very gratifying change has lately been effected in the aspect of society, particularly in reference to the pursuits of the population, and their occupation of the land.

The history of the last three years in this colony is a proud triumph for the Anglo-Saxon race, and affords another strong proof of their singular aptitude for colonisation.

Three years ago the population of the colony was 80,000. The number is now nearly 200,000, so that in that brief space upwarps of 200,900 persons have landed on these shores. By returns of the population which we have seen, it appears that the population on the various gold-fields is not more than between 70,000 and 80,000; so that upwards of 200,000 have settled down throughout the country in various other industrial pursuits. For this immense extra-population, houses have been built; and they are supplied with a system of government, law and police, churches, schools, places of amusement, and the various other appliances of civilization, which, though still somewhat deficient, and exceedingly expensive, compared with those provided in an English country are yet such as to excite the astonishment and admiration of every impartial stranger.

The progress made in everything dependent on the individual energy of the people is even more surprising. One railway from Melbourne to Hobson's Bay has been completed, and two more, from Melbourne respectively to Williamstown and Geelong, are in rapid progress, and will be completed in little more than a year from this time. Several philosophical societies are in active operation. Fishing companies, vineyard companies, a coal company for working the seams at Cape Paterson, are likewise in course of formation. Applications have been made by four or five different parties for patents for inventions of quartz-crushing and other machines connected with gold-mining. During the present year no less than seven new gold-fields; have been discovered, and are now occupied and worked by bodies of industrious diggers. Last, but not least, we hear on all sides of the progress of cultivation and settlement; and proofs are every where afforded, that the industrious and indomitable spirit characteristic of our race in "subduing the earth," has, in no degree been corrupted or diminished by the influence of gold. In no part of the world, we believe, can be seen a more energetic people than that which now occupies this rich and virgin soil.

THE GOLD.

During the last four weeks, the amount of gold-dust brought to town by the Government escort has not been quite equal to the average in the previous four weeks. This is attributed to the unusual dryness of the season, and the scarcity of water on the new diggings. As the summer season advances, we may expect to find Tarrengower, Maryborough, and Bendigo, where the country is naturally deficient of water, less productive. On the other hand, the best season is coming on for the gold-fields in the Australian Alps, Goulburn, and Gipps' Land mountains. In these latter, new discoveries are being constantly made. By a letter from a gentleman in Gipps' Land, we learn that new discoveries of gold have been made at Monkey Creek, a short distance from Bruthen, and also on the Nicholson. The discovery of a new gold-field is also reported at the junction of the rivers Goulburn and Jamieson on the Howqua station, 180 miles from town. This must be in some of the spurs of the Australian Alps. It is stated, that the country is of the same character as at the Cameo, and that the gold is of the same low standard, but larger and more water-worn.

It will be observed that there is a considerable falling off this year, both in the receipts and shipments, as compared with 1853. One cause assigned for this diminution is the decrease in the number of diggers actually at work, in consequence of the great demand for labor in the early part of the year for the various industrial operations, both in town and country. Another cause, of course, is the comparative exhaustion of the precious metal in such of the alluval drifts as have yet been discovered. The attention of the whole mining interest is now earnestly directed to the subject of regular mining in the quartz lodes which abound in the gold districts, and to the best means of crushing the quartz, and extracting the gold, of which it is found that the rocks contain a very large proportion. As already mentioned, several machines have been invented or improved, and patents are being issued for them. Of a description so patented, one firm alone is making six machines. In addition to the above extensive orders have been given for the Berdan machine, which is believed to be the most powerful of them all. The first machine at Ballarat, worked by steam-power, will be in operation in the course of a week or two. In our next summary we expect to be enabled to state the first results of this new system of operations, of which very great hopes are entertained.

LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA.

MELBOURNE, Oct. 28, 1854.—The Great Britain has done well so far, and may again—so I write to tell you, that there's been trouble at Balaarat, and a new judge has been introduced to the members of the bench—an individual who in times past obtained some notoriety in our own country. You may remember him. His name is *Lynch!*

Last week the diggers rose *en masse* against a judicial decision which liberated a notorious publican by the name of Bently who was arrested for murder. That night mob-law was supreme! More than a thousand men surrounded the house of Bently, which had been a *rendezvous* of a desperate gang of Vandiemonians, and, in spite of military, police, special constables, and the whole government power, the hotel and surrounding buildings were burned to the ground. After which, the ringleaders were taken, but the mob demanded them to be given up, which demand was complied with. As soon as the news came to town, troops and cannon were immediately sent up, with orders to "maintain the law, regardless of life or cost," and 'tis anticipated that blood will be shed. The diggers have felt their power, and are not likely to fall back for a handful of soldiers.

Sir George Grey, the present colonial minister, has instructed our new government to liberate convicts pardoned in V. D. L., who had been arrested by the laws of this colony; a monster meeting was held on Tuesday, in the open air, and such a crown of upturned faces I never witnessed before in this country. At one time probably not more than 8000 to 10,000, but coming and going there must have been 20,000. The speakers were bold in their language, and declare in resolutions passed with cheers, that the Queen, in this instance must give up her prerogative, and if you can believe what was said, she will have to do so. It is said, that Sir Charles will give way. If not, a storm will be created, that will end in cutting the painter.

Give the colonists their own way and they will remain loyal—cross their path and they will have a flag of their own!—I pity the man who sits in the governor's chair—the least movement is sure to betray a pin!

There are no commercial changes to note. Goods are tending towards the mines, but ships arriving from British ports prevent reduction of the stocks.—The Bank of Victoria, at Balarat, was robbed by an armed gang, a few days since, of about £14,000; and it is reported that the manager of the New South Wales Branch Bank, at the same place, has embezzled some £20,000! This will show you that the frauds are not all on your side.

The "Wings of the Morning" came in day before yesterday from New York, but the "Uttermast-parts-of-the-Sea" has not been heard from. "Snail," or "Tortoise, or "Drone," I would suggest for the next clipper, just for a change; I am tired of these "always-a-little-faster" clipper names.

THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON.

PARIS, THURSDAY EVENING.—The rumour which has taken every one by surprise, which has discontented most of those who have heard it, and which has produced so great a fall in the public securities, is still persisted in. I allude to the departure of the Emperor for the Crimea. It continues to be the topic of conversation, and though there are a few who still disbelieve it, yet several, who were yesterday and the day before among the most incredulous, now begin to give way. They call to mind, that the Emperor is a sort of fatalist, that he is firmly persuaded that he has a mission to fulfil, that no dangers, no difficulties, are great enough to prevent that fulfilment, that he is destined to restore the glory of his name and the nation he rules over, and that the capture of Sebastopol under his own eye, and perhaps under his command, would give his reign a *prestige* far beyond that of Algiers, and nearly equal to that of his great uncle. Those who reason thus, take it for granted, that the Emperor is convinced that his presence at the camp would inspire his army with a confidence, a courage, and an enthusiasm which neither Russian legions nor Russian fortress could withstand. They think, moreover, that the Emperor would be proud of an occasion to prove to Europe, that after having crushed unruly factions, and silenced daring or insidious opposition, brought the turbulent to order, and defied the dagger and the pistol of the assassin—after having restored tranquillity, re-established order, and made France prosperous at home, and respected and powerful abroad, and won to her alliance those who mistrusted or hated him—it would be no small triumph to prove that, while thousands of miles away, the machine his powerful hand had put together can go on of itself, and that while he is in his hut on the heights of the Crimea, Paris would go on quite as methodically, as if he was dictating laws in the Palace of the Tuileries. On the other hand, we are told by a very few, that the rumour is unfounded and that none but the most credulous swallow such a story. They admit that a journey may soon be undertaken, but they deny it is for the Crimea.