

THE TRADE OF WHITEHAVEN.

We have this week a more gratifying subject (to us) for a leading article than a brace of revolutions or half a score of victories—we mean the Messrs. Jefferson's Tea Sale—the first ever held in Whitehaven, and therefore presenting a new era in the rising commerce of the port.

Most of our readers are aware that since the opening of the China Trade the privilege of importing tea has been extended to several of the outports. Thanks to Lord Lowther, our excellent representative, Mr. Atterwood, and other active and real friends of the town at home, that privilege was granted to Whitehaven some time ago, and we thus rank with the first class ports in the kingdom. The Messrs. Jefferson, always foremost in the noble race of commercial enterprise, were the first to avail themselves of the new order of things. They despatched the Derwent on a trading voyage, her final destination being Canton; she made a quick and prosperous voyage under the able guidance of Capt. Hewitt; and never was there a finer cargo of one in better condition landed than that which she discharged here in the last week of June, consisting of upwards of 4000 chests, half chests, and catty boxes.

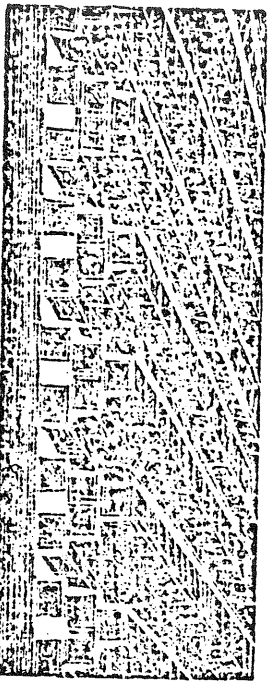
In landing these teas from the Derwent the Custom House authorities were so particular that a kind of caravan was constructed for the purpose, in which they were conveyed, under lock and key, to the bonded warehouse in Preston Street.

A few hundred chests of Canton and Fokien Boheas were removed hence to Liverpool; the remainder, upwards of 3500 chests, half chests, and catty boxes of Canton and Fokien Boheas, Congou, Caper Congou, Soucheong, Orange Pekoe, Twanky, Hyson Skin, Hyson, Young Hyson, Imperial, and Gunpowder, were divided into 538 lots, those at Liverpool were divided into 86 lots, and were also included in the Whitehaven sale.

During the arrangement and the sampling, officers of customs were continually in attendance for the protection of the revenue. This was the point on which the opponents of the extension of the privilege of import principally took their stand; their cry was that the revenue would be endangered. That was a bug-bear. There was no practical difficulty here. The officers of customs stationed among us are as able and vigilant as those found elsewhere; and our merchants are at least as honest as the merchants of the metropolis. The sale took place on Tuesday last, in the second floor of the Messrs. Jeffersons large warehouse in Preston Street, the two upper floors having been completely occupied with the teas, which were laid out with much skill, and so as to afford perfect facility of motion amongst the numerous piles of chests.

When we first entered the spacious apartments, we were astonished at the space the teas occupied, and we could scarcely persuade ourselves that the whole had been discharged from the Derwent; there seemed to be chests and boxes enough to fill half a dozen ships of her class; yet the whole cargo was not before us, for, as we have stated, from five to six hundred chests were in Liverpool.

The dimensions of the rooms are from 120 to 130 feet long, by about 50 feet broad—an ample area. On one side of the rooms, the entire length, chests were piled against the wall, three in height, with a passage way in front; and the remainder of the room was occupied with piles cross-wise, in the manner represented in the annexed sketch, (furnished by our ingenious neighbour, Mr. Bell,) leaving a passage between each row of Chests.



Each lot consisted generally of five chests, ten half chests, or ten catty boxes, with exceptions as to finer qualities, the lots of which rarely exceeded two or three chests each. All the covers were off and piled at one end of the room; and the arrangement of the boxes, one upon the other, pyramidically, enabled the dealers to inspect the contents of each. Each chest contained the King's number, the broker's number, and the number of the lot to which it belonged; so that mistake was next to impossible.

The flavour of so much fine tea, "genuine" as imported, was quite a treat to the lovers of that celestial beverage. We confess ourselves amongst the most ardent votaries of that shrine; and our opponents will at least admit that that is in character, as they, the very essence of twaddle themselves, show their total want of discrimination in designating us "the old woman," though we are at least forty years younger than the most brilliant of the imbeciles to whom we allude, not even excepting the great magician, the puller of the wires—the facetious looking, sweet countenanced, Mr. Wilson Perry—our old and very, very particular friend and legal instructor. In one sense we must say that the cap fits, for we are often compelled to *flag the brows*; and it is nothing new for culprits to vent their impotent rage in a nick name upon the dispenser of justice. To return, however, to the more pleasing part of our subject—the flavour of so Messrs. Jefferson's genuine tea. We confess that so delightful was it to the senses, we could have lingered in the rooms from "early morn to dewy eve;" nor was the sight of from twenty to thirty thousand pounds worth of tea, piled under one roof, one to be seen every day in the year; it was, at any rate a perfect novelty in Whitehaven.

The sale was exceedingly well attended, and augurs well for the future. From one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty gentlemen of the Trade were present,—some from London, several from Liverpool, Scotland, Carlisle, and the neighbouring towns, including of course most of our resident tea dealers—all busily engaged in noting down the price and purchaser of each lot.

The business part of the sale was carried on with great rapidity. No less advance than a farthing per pound at each bidding was accepted; and some idea may be formed of the prompt manner in which the lots were knocked down when we state that the whole 625 lots were gone through in about two hours; that is to say, from eleven to two o'clock. The greater part was sold, and well sold, (such, at least, was the opinion of the trade), especially the Hyson, Imperial, and Gunpowder kinds, for many of the lots of which there was frequently a marked and spirited competition. Several of the Whitehaven tea dealers bought extensively, so did the Liverpool Brokers, who held commissions from several of the dealers in the room. Mr. Delafosse, of Liverpool, for instance, bought largely for Mr. Sanderson, an extensive London dealer, who was himself present.

At the termination of the sale, the whole company were invited to a cold collation, laid out on the ground floor of the warehouse, consisting of cold beef, ham, veal pies, poultry, &c. &c.; and there was an abundant supply of those admirable wines for which the cellars of the Messrs. Jefferson are so famous all over the north of England. The set out was exceedingly elegant; and the wine bottles on the table looked like regiments of soldiers in array ready for *attaque*; nor were they "dead men" though, of course, there was considerable slaughter before the fight ended, inasmuch as nearly all who had taken part in the sale joined in the bottle. Mr. Jefferson presided with his customary ease and hospitality, and his company seemed to enjoy themselves. Only two toasts were given: "Mr. Sanderson and the Tea Trade," proposed by the chairman; and "the Messrs. Jefferson, and may the China trade prove a source of profit to them," by Mr. Nicholson of Koper Street. Both were drank with three times three. Mr. Sanderson, (one of the Society of Friends) acknowledged the compliment paid to him and his brethren of the trade, although, he said, he was not in the habit of drinking toasts, he nevertheless was sensible of the compliment, extremely, and felt grateful for it. Mr. Jefferson returned thanks for the honour done to his house and for the good wishes of his guests. Though he would not attempt to disguise the fact that he embarked in the trade with a view of benefiting himself and partner, yet he could truly assure them that the next pleasure and object he had was the being able to benefit the town in which he had been born and brought up.

It was the general remark that this first Whitehaven sale was planned and conducted with great commercial skill and tact; that the experiment was completely successful, and as the Messrs. Jefferson had begun and conducted the thing like men of business, they wound it up like "good old English Gentlemen."

So ended the first Whitehaven Tea Sale. May there be many of them! We cannot avoid congratulating the Messrs. Jefferson, and the more on their spirit in embarking in the trade, than on their pecuniary success, gratifying and important as that undoubtedly is, for it is "money that makes the mare to go." To them belongs the honour of setting an example which, we predict, will be extensively followed; and hence no one can calculate the advantages which they are the fortunate instruments in leading the way to. When the paitry deceivers of Whitehaven's welfare indulge in their habitual sneers at these gentlemen, "our first tea sale" will recur to the public memory, and the malicious and beggarly assailants will receive the contempt they merit.

While on this subject we naturally glance backward to times gone by. There are croakers among us who harp on the disgreenable string that "Whitehaven is stationary in commerce;" that she "makes no advance like other places;" nay, that she is absolutely retrograding! To such grumblers we say brush up your memories, good people, and dismiss your bile and your fears together.

We, as before said, are not that celebrated personage, "the oldest inhabitant," yet we remember a very different state of things. Besides the China trade in which we have just made so promising a beginning, we enjoy a fair general commerce. The West India trade has long been carried on here to some extent, and at no time more spiritedly than at present. (Our American timber trade is also considerable. From Holland we import their seeds, Geneva, &c.; Brandies and Wines from France; Wines, likewise from Portugal and Spain. From all these places we have not perhaps what are called *regular* traders, but vessels from thence come direct to our port with cargoes of great value for our merchants. If to this may be added our London trade, by no means unworthy of consideration. We recollect the time when we had only one vessel direct from the Thames, and that not oftener than once in four or six months. We have now four vessels belonging to this port regularly employed in the Lord's trade, one of which leaves London for Whitehaven every alternate Tuesday; and in addition to these, one of the fine smacks belonging to the Messrs. Lanctot, of Bellast, sails direct for Whitehaven with merchant goods every third Saturday; so that within twenty years, we have increased from one vessel in six months, to more than twenty vessels within that period of time! Then there is the beneficial constant trade by our steamers. Our trade in iron ore is rapidly on the increase, and at present very brisk. Lastly comes our staple—our sheet anchor—the main source of all the rest, and of the town's prosperity—our Coal Trade, which is in exceedingly good fettle, dispensing abundant employment of various kinds, and keeping up an active circulation of money, thus supplying the chief aliment of our shop-keepers and other retailers.

We are therefore not going down the hill, but ascending towards its summit. What we now want most is a good Rail Road; and oh! let there be no petty dissensions among us to retard that desideratum. If possible, give us an opening to the south, and the north, and the east; at all events give us one to the east. Something, if you please; we will not be put off with nothing. We conjure *all hands* to lend assistance to this work; and that the pull may be a strong one and one altogether.

The report from the Messrs. Julian has not yet arrived, but is expected daily. On the surface, the Canadian Line would seem to present insurmountable obstacles on account of its magnitude and expense. We say let not appearances frighten. There were the same fears originally as to the establishment of steam navigation, and many other improvements, of which we are now reaping the advantages. The voyage to China is a long one; yet that has been undertaken. The difficulties of the rail-road will in like manner vanish if properly grappled with. And that the right spirit may be roused, let it always be borne in mind that if we do not now move, and move promptly and vigorously too, other places will run away with that which naturally belongs to us. Again we say Forward!

