

advanced wing of the Whig party, who were just beginning to call themselves "Radicals," began to agitate for the abolition of hereditary titles and the destruction of the Upper House. The results of the effervescence of popular feeling were shown when the cabinet once more introduced their bill; it passed rapidly through the Commons, and after a hot debate in the House of Lords its second reading was carried by a small majority (April 14, 1832).

But the Whigs had not yet completed their victory. Instead of openly throwing out the bill, the Tory peers tried another device: they proposed to mutilate it by postponing the clauses which disfranchised the rotten boroughs, without which the bill was practically useless. When this side blow was successful in the Lords, Grey promptly resigned and challenged the opposition to take over the management of affairs if they dared. The king sent for the Duke of Wellington, and invited him to form a Tory cabinet. For seven days the Iron Duke contemplated the possibility of facing the angry nation, and sounded his party as to their willingness to take the risk. During that week the nation was on the brink of civil war; many of the more hot-headed leaders of the Whig party made preparations for arming the members of the Reform associations and marching on London. Others, with greater ingenuity, organized a run on the Bank of England, in the hope that the enemy would not dare to face a financial as well as a political crisis. "To stop the duke, go for gold" was the word passed round among the merchants of London (May 8-15, 1832).

Fortunately for the peace of the realm, Wellington shrank from the responsibility of accepting office. He found that it was very doubtful if the army could be trusted to act against the people. His Tory friends showed a general reluctance to accept the posts in his projected cabinet. Finally, he returned to the king and advised him to send again for Lord Grey, as

Attempts by the Lords to mutilate the bill.

Wellington refuses to take office—The bill carried.