

The Politician.

The British Press.

From the London Shipping Gazette.
THE COLONIAL TRADE.

It is truly deplorable to consider the state of demoralization into which the seamen engaged in the North American trade, and more especially the Quebec trade, are plunged through the machinations of the ruffianly crimps who are permitted to carry on their nefarious traffic in that city. To us it seems most unaccountable that the Colonial office and the local Government and legislature cannot conjointly put down this vile gang, and the trade in which they are engaged. No sooner does a vessel arrive at Quebec than the crew are beset by crimps, who prevail on them to desert, harbour them in debauchery, and then literally sell them to some other vessel which has undergone a similar visitation, and is left without men to navigate her home. Five, six, and seven pounds are constantly given to a man for the run home, while the crimps artfully manage that the greater part of the money shall be paid in advance, when they, as a matter of course, pocket it in payment of the bill they have trumped up for the sailor's entertainment. What is this but selling the services of the seamen for the advantage of the crimp? It is really disgraceful that such a system should be allowed to prevail in any part of her Majesty's dominions.

We are among those who thought that the Act for the Registering of seamen would check, if not entirely put a stop to, desertion; and such, we are confident, would be the effect of a proper and efficient registry, which, unfortunately the present one is not. The second clause of the existing enactment says, that "it shall not be lawful for the master of any ship to carry to sea any seaman who shall not be provided with a register ticket." But it has been decided that this term applies only to vessels sailing from the ports of the United Kingdom, and that a register ticket is not required of a man shipping at a foreign or colonial port. This at once accounts for the crimping trade that is carried on at Quebec; it offers no check whatever to desertion; the seaman runs from his ship, leaves his register ticket in the master's hands, and trusts to his own ingenuity, or the aid of the English crimps, to procure a new ticket when he returns home in another vessel. We believe, indeed, there is no difficulty in any seaman effecting this, and yet, surely, even under the existing clumsy piece of legislation, where the Registry act has been in operation for more than ten years, no ticket should be given to a new applicant without the most rigid scrutiny. If a different construction were put upon the second clause of the Act, or if it were so worded as to require the production of a register ticket, whether the seamen were shipped at home or not, it would throw some little difficulty in the way of desertion at Quebec. The crimps would soon discover that they had a stock on hand which was unsaleable.

In a correspondence which appeared in our columns on the 18th inst., between a Mr. Campbell, a Notary Public at Quebec, and some of the government authorities there, Mr. Campbell, in a circular addressed to shipowners on this subject, says, "One of the causes which influence seamen to endeavour to be relieved from the engagements they enter into before sailing for this country, is, the immense disproportion between the rate of wages at which they ship at Great Britain, and the rates held out to them here. Until some means can be devised to ensure a supply of seamen for the vessels annually built here, and fill the places of such as are prevented by death or sickness, from prosecuting their voyages, I fear this evil cannot be wholly prevented." But it is not merely to man the ships built in the colony that seamen desert at Quebec: among the vessels that go out from England there is a constant interchanging of seamen, through the medium of desertion and re-entering in other vessels for the run home at the exorbitant wages which prevail in the colony. For our part we can see no reason why these colonial ships should not, equally with the ships of this country, be required to conform to the registration clause of the Merchant Seamen's act: this would oblige the owners of the colonial ships to provide crews for them, and not systematically to depend upon manning them with deserters through the medium of crimps. It is an excessive hardship on the British shipowners, that he should not only have to compete with colonial ships built for £4 or £5 a ton but also have to pay exorbitant wages beyond which he engaged to do to furnish crews for these rival vessels. We cannot think that this evil is so irremediable as it is said to be, if the colonial office, the Board of Trade, and the Admiralty would take proper steps in the matter. Mr. Campbell says in his letter—"the changes made in the Merchant Seamen's Act, and more particularly, all that cumbersome machinery by which it was intended to prevent desertion, by means of register tickets, may, I think, be pronounced a complete failure; and the sooner a repeal of all the provisions on this head can be obtained the better." We agree with the writer that the registry clauses have proved a failure in preventing desertion, but we do not agree with him that on this account the Act should be repealed: we would not pull down the edifice because it needed some repairs; we would not break up the vessel because it required to go into the dock. The registration clauses might, we are confident, be made effectual to prevent desertion, and to

put down its concomitant evil—crimping, even at Quebec: the one would fall with the other. But then the act must be remodelled, and an entire new registry acted upon. Why is the Admiralty so listless in this matter? Why does this board offer no assistance to put down desertion at Quebec? It ought surely to feel some interest in preventing the demoralization of British seamen. There are generally from 300 to 400 sail of vessels in the St. Lawrence, at one time, during the season, and in the summer of last year we pointed out how necessary it was to have three or four vessels of war there, as a support to the masters of the commercial marine in preserving something like order among their men, arresting desertion and preventing mutiny. We anticipate the best moral effects from the appearance of a few ships of war in the river; and the leaving of so many merchant vessels there, altogether unprotected, is, in our opinion, a gross dereliction of the duty which devolves upon the Admiralty. The Navigation of the St. Lawrence will soon be open, and we would strongly urge, not merely the propriety, but the necessity of stationing a frigate or two, and some smaller vessels, in the river during the coming season. As a mere experiment it would be worth trying.

Colonial News.

New Brunswick.

St. John Observer, May 11.

The weather since the commencement of the present month has been favourable for agricultural employments—the grass fields are beginning to look green. Gardening has commenced.

Agricultural Prospects.—Accounts from various parts of the United States speak of the crops having at present an auspicious appearance. At the West, thousands of acres of new land, never before cultivated, have been sown with grain.

From the St. John Courier.

We understand that the annual meeting of Wesleyan Ministers for New Brunswick District, which was to have taken place in this City next week, has been postponed for the present.

It is expected that a meeting of the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Districts, will be held in June or July, for the purpose of taking into consideration the general interests of the Wesleyan Church, in the lower provinces.

Dr. Alder, now on his way to carry out some church arrangements with the Upper Canada conference, is to be present at the meeting, which, we believe, is to be held at Sackville.

Lives Lost.—We learn from Captain Hemeon, of the Schr. Mary, that about 10 days ago, an American fishing vessel put into Cape Negro, after having experienced a severe gale on the Bank, where, in the act of cutting the cable, she shipped a sea, which swept away six of the crew.

Fredericton Head Quarters, May 12.

First Steamboat for Fredericton in 1847.—On Thursday last, the 6th instant, the steamer Fredericton, Captain Mowry, arrived here, about 8 o'clock in the morning, bringing with her a load of flour and other supplies, which were much wanted in this City. On Friday the Meteor also paid us her first visit, since which time both Boats have taken up their regular trips.

Canada.

Quebec Gazette, May 3.

"The merry month of May" commenced on Saturday with ice an inch thick formed during the preceding night, and hail and snow in the forenoon which whitened the dirt on the snow and ice in the streets. Yesterday morning the new ice was nearly half an inch in thickness, but the thermometer in the shade rose to 55° in the course of the day. Last night and this morning it rained. The snow on a level is still nearly three feet in depth, and in some places it is heaped to the top of the fences. The ground underneath the snow is free from frost, and as much ploughing was done last fall, crops, particularly oats, may be put in immediately on the melting of the snow, which will ensure a good crop of grain, now the safest dependence of the farmer. The season has not been favourable for the running of the juice of the maple trees, and it is now probable that the sap will soon rise and prevent much more sugar being made.

The scarcity of fodder will be in some measure remedied the moment the snow is off the ground from the rapidity of vegetation and the length of the grass last autumn.

Early potatoes and others, sown early, may still be tried; and as it is probable that there will be little frost after the ground is clear, no time ought to be lost

in sowing peas, beans, Indian corn, carrots, beet root, Cabbage, Swedish turnips or *chou de Siam*, all in drills, that the ground may be kept clean and prepared for another crop. Three months wheat, sown late, is most likely to escape the fly, and barley and buckwheat rye may also be sown late; field turnips generally will give a good crop, if sown in drills early in July and the ground worked between the drill.

There never was a time when the intelligence and industry of the farmer, was more necessary than at present.

We are indebted to Mr. H. E. SCOTT, for the following extract of a letter:—

"THREE RIVERS, 1st May, 1847.

11 o'clock, A. M.

"The unusual sight of seeing a May-Pole planted on the ice in the river St. Lawrence, opposite here, took place this morning at 7 o'clock; about ten, the ice began to make a shove, and is still in motion. I think the river will now move bodily in the course of the day, as the water is very high—over our wharf. The Lake will no doubt follow, and by Thursday, I hope to see the navigation open. Ice now moving down, 11 o'clock, A. M.

Mr. Scott has also received a letter stating that the river from Boucherville upwards was clear of ice, and that the steamer *Montreal* was to leave that place for Montreal to-day.

From the Montreal Transcript.

Canadian Appointments.—His Honor Judge Rolland has been appointed to the office of Chief Justice of the queen's Bench, vacant by the death of the late Chief Justice Valeres de St. Real.

The Hon. James Smith retires from the office of Attorney General East, and re-places the Chief Justice as Puisne Judge.

The latter appointment vacates the representation of the County of Missisquoi.

Serious affair in Canada.—The *Durham Commercial Advertiser* states that on Sunday April the fourth, three boys were shot by Mr. N. Hagerman. They were sitting in a line on a log, after making free with Mr. H's sugar making apparatus, and were eating the stolen sweets when Mr. H. came upon them with a loaded gun, the contents of which he discharged in the faces and breasts of the boys, one of whom was severely wounded. Mr. H. is bound over in bonds of £200 for his appearance at the next assizes.

United States News.

New Orleans Delta, April 25.

Mexico, April 1, 1847.—Santa Anna leaves to-day (April 2) for Jalapa, where he will unite his force with that of Gen. Lavega. He takes with him about 20,000 men of all arms, the greater part of them being taken from (jarocheda) the lowest class of the people, who are very good for fighting. They will however, have no other advantage over the army, which marched from San Luis, except that they will not be compelled to the same dreary march through vast wildernesses, and exposed to continual cold and rain. But they are equally destitute of resources and means, having no provisions, and no money with which to buy any. We have, therefore, no reasons for expecting any other results than have characterized the former enterprises.

The Next Crops.—Everything at present looks auspicious for the crops at the coming season—there has been heavy surplus planting—thousands of acres West have been ploughed this year and grain sown which had never before been cultivated. In a few years we shall be

New York Sun, May 8.

AFRICA.

A Hecatomb Sacrifice.—A paragraph has been circulating, which we could not at first credit, on account of the barbarity detailed. A son of the King of Calabar, West Africa, had been dancing *egbo* through the day and drinking *mimby*, or palm wine which caused his death in the night. It was supposed he had been poisoned, and his frantic mother ordered a sacrifice of slaves in revenge. Those at the market and all who heard it in time, fled to the bush, and will remain concealed, as these sacrifices sometimes last a whole year. The sacrifice however commenced, by digging three holes, and putting into the first the corpse, and a number of young women, into the second slaves, and into the third, Creoles or town born people. The proportion in each hole was as follows; thirty female slaves, forty male slaves, and thirty-nine Creoles. King Eyamidy was besought by the missionaries present to spare the sacrifice, but would not.

YESTERDAY'S MAIL!

BRITISH NEWS.

The Courier did not arrive until seven o'clock yesterday evening—and to the astonishment of every person brought the first May British Mail. It was conveyed to Halifax by the Britannia, which vessel arrived at that port a little before noon on Saturday last; she therefore made her passage in 11 days. Thirteen days only have elapsed since the departure of the mail in Liverpool to its receipt in Miramichi.

We have devoted all our available space to extracts, which are principally copied from Willmer and Smith's European Times of the 4th of the month. They embrace every thing of importance that has transpired in the old world since the departure of the previous steamer.

A. Ritchie, Esq., came out in the steamer, and arrived here with the courier.

It will be seen by references to our 'Commercial Review,' that in London yesterday there was again a decline of 1 per cent in consols, and that the stock market of the metropolis was influenced by that reaction. The corn markets experienced an opposite movement, which should, however, be regarded with a degree of caution, taking place, as it did, on the eve of the Britannia sailing for the United States and Canada, and being affected, it is said, to a considerable extent by adverse advices from Germany.

Since we last alluded to the position of the bank of England, matters have become worse, and the whole commercial world, from Cornwall to Caithness, and from Cape Clear to the Giant's Causeway, are up in arms against our absurd monetary policy. Great is the triumph of the currency doctors, and loud their exultation at the embarrassment which is bringing many to ruin, and has already caused proud heads to bow in humble prostration. The policy of the bank of England is assailed; but in reality the bank is not to blame. Restricted as the bank is by Acts of Parliament, all the directors can do is to square their policy to the legal requirements of the charter, while, at the same time they serve their own interests as private dealers. An increase of bullion in the bank's coffers is held to be the only legitimate reason for an increase in its issue of paper; the decrease of bullion to be followed by a decrease in the issues; so that, in point of fact, the state of the foreign exchanges is the lever which regulates the affairs of every merchant, and more or less the resources of the poor, equally with the most wealthy in the land. No Act of Parliament can provide for the various contingencies arising from local and natural causes. The bank restriction Act was framed, of course, in ignorance that a famine would prevail in Ireland, two years in succession, calling for a heavy drain of bullion to pay the expenses of importing large quantities of food, and making the transmission of bullion abroad a matter of speculation, and of profit. Under a system so stringent and so absurd, the bank is utterly powerless to regulate the currency, without pressing with great severity on the commercial world at one time, and indulging in an excess of laxity at another. To provide against a run for gold—to protect the solvency of a great national establishment—may be very good, as far as precaution goes, but the benefit is more than counterbalanced by the accompanying evils. The consequence is, that the bank cannot—dare not—discount the paper of the first commercial houses in the British metropolis; and parties who own property enough to purchase a principality are as unable to extend their financial operations as a man in a straight jacket is to move his limbs freely. Anything more absurd than such a principle, it is difficult to conceive. It is stated, that so crippled are many parties during the present pressure—parties too, who hold a large slice of the national debt—that their business is brought to a stand. The ramifications extend over the whole commercial world. The evil is experienced by the merchant in his counting house—by the farmer in his granaries—by the peasant in his cottage—by the prince in his palace. The price of every article of produce is reduced by the pressure, and securities of all kinds suffer a real depreciation. The money market is the commercial pulse of the country; its throbs are felt throughout all the arteries of the body politic.

These evils have at length reached a height so gigantic, and are inflicting consequences so serious, that a panic is anticipated; and to provide against it deputations have gone to London from Liverpool, Manchester, and other towns, to remonstrate with the Government. In the manufacturing districts the distress is awful, and the end is not yet. The joint stock and the private banks that have running accounts with the Bank of England are obliged to follow in the wake of that great corporation, and press upon their customers in the same ratio that they themselves are pressed upon. The worst feature of all is, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who ought from his position to be the most clear headed financier in the land, seems like the commander of a ship without a rudder, unable either to steer correctly, or to be conscious of the existence of the breakers ahead. From a conversation which took place in the House of Commons on Monday he is evidently ignorant, or not at all apprehensive, of the impending crash. This ignorance has alarmed commercial men as much as the actual position of affairs.