

whitening for the harvest. Such and so imperceptible in the stages of their motion, are the victories of the press.

The Politician.

The British Press.

From the London Shipping Gazette.
STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

In a very few days there will be a committee of each house of Parliament engaged in an inquiry into a very vital question connected with the interests of the British empire—namely, an inquiry into the causes of the recent commercial distress, and how far this may have been occasioned by the state of the currency. Now from an inquiry of this kind the most important consequences may or may not result, according to the manner in which it is conducted: the greatest benefits may be conferred upon the country, or the greatest evils may be entailed upon it, according to the decisions at which these committees may arrive. It is, we think sufficiently apparent that to reach a fair conclusion, the whole question of the free trade policy must be opened up, for it will be impossible to come to any just and satisfactory arrangement respecting the currency until the foreign commercial relations of the country are thoroughly understood. If in its commercial dealings it is found that the country is buying more from abroad than it has the means to pay for it is obvious that any attempt to advance the currency to the national wants will be perfectly futile, until the national trade is made consonant with the national means. Sir Robert Peel, when seized with the *furor* of Free Trade, seemed to think that if England imported all the produce of the earth, and not only imported but consumed it, it would be a national benefit, no matter whether the other countries of the world did or did not take from us to the value of ten thousand pounds annually; and the thoughtless multitude gave in to this opinion, assuming, we suppose, that the right hon. baronet was gifted with the regal prerogative—he could do no wrong. Before the committees attempt to regulate the currency, they must begin to unravel the intricate skein at the right end, they must ascertain what the foreign trade of the kingdom is, and what it is likely to be, under free trade. It is not how many millions of produce we may export, or how many millions we may import, but the relation which the one bears to the other. If Great Britain exports or has otherwise to pay to foreigners sixty millions of pounds annually, while on the other hand, foreigners only take from us to the amount of fifty millions of pounds, there is a balance of ten millions of pounds against the country which no internal regulation of the currency can possibly provide for. Now if the inquiry is entered into with this spirit,—if it is entered into with a determination to elicit the truth and not to serve the purposes of party we are confident it will be found that free trade cannot be persevered in without national ruin. It should be considered how largely we already purchase from foreigners—cotton, tobacco, timber, flax, hemp, tar, reisin, tallow, tea, and a considerable proportion of grain and other provisions, with innumerable minor articles, while under the Free Trade policy, we are proposing to give also to foreigners a monopoly of the sugar market, and what would probably very soon amount to a monopoly of the shipping business engaged in carrying trade to and from the country. We hope the committees, when they assemble, will put all these matters into figures—it can easily be done—and then strike a balance between the national outgoings and the national incomings. This will be the plain mercantile way to arrive at a just conclusion, and it is only in this way that any measures can be founded which will give relief to the national distress or permanency to the national welfare. If we could hope that that the inquiries to be instituted would be conducted in the spirit of a candid and impartial search after truth we should have no apprehension for the result, but the most perfect confidence that, dark and lowering as the national horizon now is, Great Britain will soon surmount the storm by which it is threatened.

COMMERCIAL MARINE.

The serious height which insubordination has attained in our mercantile marine calls imperatively for stringent measures, both legislative and otherwise, to grapple with the evils produced by this awful state of things. Many and various are the reasons assigned which have operated to this end, and among others the advance note system—a system, no doubt, originally introduced from motives of mutual obligation between shipowners and seamen, and when the necessity for the advance was much greater than at the present time—i.e., the shipowners could not get seamen, not that they were scarce; because the seamen were in pecuniary difficulties with the shipowners, but that brought about their degradation; and they exercise even now a powerful influence over them; seamen could, however, only be obtained through their agency; hence the shipowners were driven to the alternative of incurring an outlay in anticipation of services to be performed, little fancying that, by so doing, evils would be produced which either jeopardised their property, or sowed the seeds of disaffection and insubordination, which prevailed afterwards more or less during the voyage, to the discomfiture of those

in command. We maintain now that there is not now that absolute necessity for these advance notes which formerly existed, as small stores, such as tea, coffee, sugar &c., constitute a portion of the dietary articles not allowed in olden times; slops and tobacco can also be had from the master, should they be wanted; and the lien which the crimps and lodging house-keepers had upon the sailor is removed after he has engaged to serve, by the registration act. A seaman can therefore, with the kit which has provided when last paid off, reship himself without the agency of crimps, as the plea formerly used for the advance no longer exists. He would then start with a perfect knowledge that he has not to work out the 'dead horse,' that each day adds to his claim against the ship, and by the time she arrives out he indulges in no desire to desert, but would feel that he is bound to her by ties of personal interest. Very different is the moving principle of too many seamen under the present system, when advance notes are granted. They are not constrained by any moral obligation; their conduct is too frequently one tissue of insubordination, which, if nothing worse happens, ends on desertion on the ship arriving out, to seek higher wages on the return voyage.

Our attention has been called to this subject by the directors of the sailor's home, the seaman's true friends, who have forwarded a printed statement addressed to shipowners, being considerations 'on advance note system,' which will be found in another column, and is well worthy of a perusal. There can be but one opinion on the part of shipowners upon this subject: the difficulty appears to be how shall it be provided for? While we recommend the abolition of advance notes, we strongly urge the continuation, and even extension, of the system of allowing monthly notes to the wives and families of those men who deserve it; by such means the tie would be strengthened, as the frequent communications with all parts of the world would enable the shipowners to stop the payment of them in cases of desertion. If we might be allowed to suggest an attempt, to bring seamen to a knowledge of their own interest, it would be to offer them five per cent, per month more than the ordinary wages of the day, provided they signed articles without receiving any advance. While this would entail upon an already oppressed property a little additional burden, the shipowners would in return, have the certainty secured to them that there was less risk of their property being exposed to danger. It would, moreover, be an overture to seamen to ship as independent men, and not, as at present, in *forma pauperis*. The suggestion is worthy of consideration, and wherever it succeeds, the vessels are properly commanded, we shall not hear of those disgraceful scenes on board them which are daily brought to public notice as occurring on board ships sailing under the present system.

European News.

Miscellaneous articles, copied from late Papers.

Malta.—A case of Asiatic cholera occurred on board the French steamboat *Mentor*, which terminated fatally in Malta harbour on the 17th.

The late Elector of Hesse, who was one of the richest sovereigns of Europe, leaves a fortune of upwards of 1000,000,000 fr. (4,000,000l.) He has appointed the Emperor of Austria his principal executor.

The King of Naples has given orders to increase the pay of all the Engineers in his steam fleet, (who are Englishmen,) at the same time ordering them to wear the cocked-hat and sword.

The Glasgow Factories.—There are 2676 hands thrown out of employment and nearly all the mills presently going are on short time.

The military enthusiasm of the young men is so great at Rome and at Florence, that they practice manual exercise with umbrellas and canes instead of muskets.

Of the 170,000 weavers in Lancashire only 48,000 are fully employed.

Dublin.—Several heavy failures have taken place during the week, and by one it is believed that one of the banks has been a sufferer to an extent exceeding 38,000l.

Upwards of 14,000 are receiving outdoor relief at Preston.

More rain fell during the last month than in any month of October for six or eight years past.

The beggars of the metropolis number 60,000, and the alms they obtain amount to 1,200,000l. a year—an average of 20l. for each beggar.

One of the men arrested on suspicion of being concerned in the murder of Major Mahon, died suddenly, after being lodged in Roscommon Gaol.

Nearly 300l. was collected at the several Catholic chapels on Sunday last, for the national monument to O'Connell.

A great tenant-right demonstration is to come off in the county of Cork early in December.

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge have granted the sum of

800l. towards the erection of a cathedral at Fredericton, New Brunswick.

Arctic Expedition.—It is now determined that three expeditions are to be sent to the Arctic region in search of Sir John Franklin and his party. One will be despatched to the coast of a few days to Bhering's Straits; the second will sail early in the ensuing spring to Baffin's Bay, and will be under the command of Sir James Ross; and the third will consist of an overland expedition, to be placed under the direction of Sir John Richardson. The boats, with their crews of twenty men, belonging to the last named expedition, went out to Hudson's Bay during the late summer; and intelligence of their safe arrival at York Factory, and departure for the interior, has reached this country. They were to winter at Cumberland house, or at Saskatchewan river; and as soon as the navigation opens in the spring are to resume their voyage to the Mackenzie river. Sir John Richardson and another officer will leave England in March next, for Canada; and by travelling in light canoes, by the usual route of fur traders to the North west, they hope to overtake the boats in July, and with them reach the Arctic Sea in the beginning of August, with an ample supply of nutritious and solid food. The intention of this party is to track the coast to the eastward of Mackenzie river; to communicate with the various tribes of Esquimaux, in expectation of gleaming some tidings of the discovery ships; to examine Wollaston land, and trace, as far as practicable, any inlets that may lead to the north; to erect land-marks on various headlands, with written communications buried underneath, and when the winter closes, to repair to winter quarters at Grea Bear Lake, by the Copper Mine river. The boat parties to be sent out from the vessel, which is to winter within Bhering's Straits, together with parties over the ice in spring, will, it is hoped, fully explore the sea to the westward of the Mackenzie; and as one of Sir James Ross's ships is to be stationed in Lancaster sound, at the north end of North Somerset, parties will explore that neighbourhood. Another of Sir James's ships will push on to Band's Land, and in like manner send out exploring parties in every direction; the one sent southward having the prospect of intersecting Sir J. Richardson's route, and, if thought expedient, of communicating with him by the Copper Mine River. The search of the coast and of Wollaston and Victoria Land will be resumed by Sir John Richardson in the summer of 1849, if necessary.

Railways.—A tunnel two and a quarter miles in length, is in the course of construction, under the town of Liverpool, designed to connect the railroad depot at Edghill with the north docks at the water's edge, where the foreign shipping centres. This great tunnel is to be called the Victoria tunnel, and when it is completed, ship's cargoes will be taken directly to the depot at Edghill, without the present heavy cost of cartage. The tunnel undermines in its course several churches, which will be only sixty feet above the level of the locomotive. The railway company (London and North-western) have to pay compensation to the owners of every house and building under which the tunnel passes. Two thousand men are now employed on this great work, the operations of which are very dangerous, shaking sometimes the foundations of the houses above.

One of these wonders of the age, the tubular bridge is so far advanced towards completion, that its erection across the wide channel of the river Conway is expected in the course of the ensuing month. The site of the bridge is on the south side of Talford's suspension bridge, close to the wall of the Conway castle bridge [also by Telford]. It will be precisely of the same description as the one to be across the Menai straits, the Conway bridge consisting of two tubes or tunnels [one for the up and the other for the down line of rail,] each four hundred feet in length, while the quantity of tubing required for the Menai bridge is upwards of three thousand feet. It is rectangular in form, consisting entirely of sheet iron, one inch in thickness. The inside, through which the trains are to pass, is twenty four feet high and fifteen feet wide. The outside height is much greater, being about thirty feet. The top is of two thicknesses of metal, in the corrugated shape, forming a series of circular tubes of about three feet in diameter. This form is considered to offer the greatest resistance to compression. The sides are of sheet iron of one thickness, the bottom has a double thickness, three feet apart, connected by intermediate longitudinal ribs, so as to give the necessary stiffness for the car-

riages to pass over. The whole mass, weighing upwards of one thousand tons, will be placed on the abutments at once. The place where it is being constructed is on a huge timber platform, in a curve of the Conway a few hundred yards from the intended site of the bridge. The important process of testifying the machine will be carried forth on the spot where it now lies. Immediately the tube is completed, with the aid of a flood tide and pontoons it will be raised so as to admit of the platform on which it is erected being carried away. The result is looked forward to with much interest. It was inspected last week by Mr Stephenson, Mr Ross, Captain Huish, Mr King, (the secretary of the Chester and Holyhead company), and many of the directors of the company; on that day the Chester and Holyhead line was opened to the extent of 40 miles.—*Sarewisburg Chronicle.*

Hull.—The following illustration of the lines in Hamlet

Imperial Caesar dead, and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away,
occurs in a Yorkshire paper:—Millions of bushels of human bones have been transported from the Continent to Hull for agricultural purposes. These, which were collected on the plains of Leipsic, Austerlitz, and Waterloo, were the bones of the bold, the brave, and the chivalrous who fell fighting their country's battles. With them were mixed the bones of the horses, and both were conveyed to Yorkshire, where they were ground to dust sent to Doncaster, and sold for manure.

Influenza at Marseilles.—Individuals arriving from Marseilles informs us, that of a population of 160,000 souls, the half at least is confined to bed through the influenza, which has broken out in this town the last week. Persons remembering that the influenza preceded the cholera morbus, and reading in the journals the new itinerary of the Asiatic scourge, feel their terrors increase, though the present epidemic is as inoffensive as the former one. A very curious fact connected with the influenza at Marseilles is, that the *Luxor*, a steamer from Alexandria to Marseilles, arrived in Egypt having the influenza on board. Its progress was such that the steamer could not continue its voyage as far as Syria.

War with China.—Constant war with China is inevitable, unless we are permanently established at Chusan, from whence a single war steamer could in a few hours stop the whole internal navigation of the empire. The imperial grain ships (6000) must pass near it on their way to Peking; their cargoes are valued at 24,000,000 taels (£5,000,000 sterling). It requires no great foresight to predict whether this would not be more efficacious than blowing up a few matforts, or sending our brave soldiers to Hong Kong which is at the extremity of a line of sea-coast of 2000 miles.

The Pasha of Egypt.—Alexandria, October 22. Mehemet Ali in his old age is becoming quite sociable and civilized. His highness seems to relish the society of Europeans, and to feel that their conversation is more entertaining than that of his courtiers and the bigoted Turks about him. On the 12th instant he gave a grand dinner to the European Consuls in Alexandria, to meet the Russian consul who has only recently come to Egypt. The gentlemen were not invited alone, but those having families were invited to bring their wives and daughters with them. A most sumptuous repast of thirty covers was spread out in elegant European fashion in the palace at Rash el Teen, and the table presented a very animated appearance, having the Viceroy at the head, seated between two European ladies, to whom he showed the greatest attention. There was a sprinkling of grey headed Turks among the pasha's guests, and the whole feast went off with great satisfaction to all parties. After dinner pipes were handed round to all the guests, without omitting the ladies, to whom those most richly mounted were offered. Some of the ladies only pretended to smoke—to refuse the pipe would have been an unpardonable offence—but the other ladies seemed to enjoy inhaling the fumes of the Viceroy's excellent tobacco.

The Effects of Almsgiving.—The Dublin Evening Mail says:—Our readers will not require to be reminded of the lamentable precedence in misery and helplessness successfully asserted by the population of the county of Mayo during the past winter and spring. Some of them, may perhaps remember the pathetic indifference with which offers of seed, and exhortations to provide for the future by cultivating their land, were listened to by the people, along the coast of that unfortunate district; but few will be prepared for the cry of woe that