

government of France; of this nature, too, was a paper money issued by the government of the United States, in the crisis of revolution, and by the Dutch in their celebrated war for the independence of the republic. The Blacks, on the coast of Africa, have a sign purely ideal for fixing the value of their commodities. When they wish to make an exchange of them, they say such an article is worth five macutes, and another ten macutes; and yet a macute can neither be seen or felt; it is entirely an abstract term, and not applicable to any sensible object. Is it a coin? is it a token? is it a measure? It is neither a token, nor a coin, nor a measure; for they do not exchange their merchandize for three, five, or ten macutes, but for some article worth the same number of macutes. A bank note is a promise to pay on demand a certain quantity of gold and silver; and as it has no intrinsic value, its whole value depends on the belief given to this promise. The quantity of gold and silver for which it is a promise is the standard of its value, and when it deviates from this standard, when it is not worth the quantity of gold and silver for which it is a promise, it may be fairly said, from whatever cause, to be depreciated, or to have experienced a loss in value. The standard price of gold bullion is £3 17 10½ an ounce; four £1 bank notes then contain so many promises to pay something more than an ounce of bullion; and when bullion is sold for paper at £4 10s. 6d., and £5 10d. per ounce, it is clear that the paper is not of the same value as the gold, for which it is a promise, or in other words, it is depreciated. In England, gold has been purchased with bank of England notes, at all these prices. Guineas, it is well known, were sold at 24, 25, and 26 shillings in paper, and the discount would have been still greater if the sale had not been prohibited under severe penalties.

In England, for 234 years after the Roman conquest, a pound in weight, or, which is the same thing, a pound weight of silver was coined into twenty shillings. In the reign of Edward I, the standard was for the first time changed, and having been once violated, it was gradually debased, until, in 1601, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, sixty two shillings were coined out of a pound. This was a reduction of about two-thirds in the standard, so that all the stipulations in contracts entered into in the reign immediately subsequent to the conquest, might, in 1631, and since, be legally discharged by the payment of one third of the sums that had been really bargained for, and yet the standard has been less degraded in England than any other country. In France, the livre, or pound in tale, contained, in the reign of Charlemagne, precisely a pound weight of pure silver; but by successive degradations, it contained at the commencement of the French revolution only the sixth of an ounce, or one seventy-second part of a pound of silver. In Scotland, the pound weight of silver, which had previously to 1266 been coined into £1, or twenty shillings, was in 1601 coined into £36 pounds, or 720 shillings. The Spanish coin called a maravedi, which in 1220 weighed 34 grains of gold, and of course must have been worth about 14 shillings of our present money, is now become a small copper coin equal only to about 45-272 of an English penny. The principle of degradation, however, has not been uniformly acted upon. The quantity of bullion contained in a coin of the same denomination, has sometimes, though rarely, been increased, and creditors enriched at the expense of these debtors. The method of swindling his subjects is said to have been first resorted to by Heliogabalus. The Roman citizens being bound to pay into the imperial treasury not a certain weight of gold, but a certain number of pieces of gold, or aureus, the Emperor, whose vices have become proverbial, in order to increase his means of dissipation, without appearing to add to the weight of the taxes, increased the quantity of metal contained in the aureus, and thus obtained by a dishonest trick, what it would have been difficult for him to have obtained by a fair and honorable proceeding. In France, the coins have been frequently raised in value. In the reign of Philip Le Bel, who ascended the throne in 1235, the value of the coins had been reduced to such an extent as to occasion the most violent complaints on the part of the clergy and landholders, and generally of all that portion of his subjects who could not raise their incomes proportionably to the reduction of the value of money. To appease this discontent, and in compliance with an injunction of the Pope, the king at last consented to issue

new coins of the same denomination with those previously current, but which contained about three times the quantity of silver. This, however, was merely shifting an oppressive burden from the shoulders of one class to those of another, who were less able to bear it. The degraded money having been in circulation for about sixteen years, by far the largest proportion of the existing contracts must have been adjusted exclusively with reference to its value. No wonder, therefore, that those who were in the situation of debtors, should have declared their repugnance to submit to so shameful an act of injustice as was done them.

By this enhancement of the value of money, and that they should have refused to make good their engagements otherwise than in money of the value, of that which had been current at the time when they were entered into, the laboring classes, to whom every sudden rise in the value of money is always injurious, having joined the debtors in their opposition, they broke out into open rebellion. The people, says Le Blanc, in his excellent history of French money, being reduced to despair, and having no longer anything to care for, lost the respect due to the edict of his majesty. They pillaged the house of the master of the mint, who was believed to have been the chief adviser of the measure, besieged the temple in which the king lodged, and did all that an infuriated populace is capable of doing. The sedition was ultimately suppressed, but it is not mentioned whether any abatement was made by authority from the claims of the creditors in the contracts entered into when the light money was in circulation. It seems probable, however, from what is elsewhere mentioned by Le Blanc, that such was really the case. [Remainder next week.]

The Politician.

The Colonial Press.

From the Halifax Nova Scotian.

RECIPROCAL FREE TRADE.

We understand that the United States Government have declined to entertain the proposition of the Canadians for a reciprocal Free Trade. All the circumstances considered, we are not sorry that they have done so. Although the Americans have refused to treat with Canada alone, we have strong reasons for believing that the Cabinet at Washington are not averse to the formation of a commercial treaty, on the basis of a reciprocal Free Trade, which will include all the British North American Provinces. This is as it should be. If there is to be a new commercial treaty with the United States, all the B. N. American Colonies should participate in its advantages and be parties to the compact. To effect this desirable object, arrangements have been made, by the several Colonial Governments, for a meeting of Delegates from Canada, New Brunswick, Prince Edwards' Island, and Newfoundland, in this city, early in the ensuing month. The Convention will consist of two leading members of the Executive Council, of each colony. The movement is an important one. Our Trade has been too long 'cribbled, cabined and confined.' We want a wider field for the products of colonial industry. We want something to stimulate colonial capitalists and laborers—a market.

A reciprocal Free Trade with the twenty millions of people living alongside of us, would give us all we want. The Americans want coal, iron, fish, lumber, &c., the products of the colonies, and we require their breadstuffs and manufactures. Although it is self-evident that a reciprocal Free Trade would be advantageous to all parties, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the question is beset with difficulties. The American Government will be pressed by the Mining interests of Pennsylvania, the Lumbermen of Maine, and the Fishermen of Maine and Massachusetts, not to relax their protective policy. Even these difficulties surmounted, the Cabinet at Washington are not likely to allow the inhabitants of these colonies to enter the ports and rivers of the Union to trade upon equal terms with their own people, without demanding corresponding advantages. The Americans can do better without us than we can do without them. We can only offer them about two millions of customers in exchange for about ten times that number. A relaxation of the treaty which grants the exclusive right of fishing within three marine miles of the shore, will probably be demanded. This is likely to be the turning point of the negotiation. The Canadians, naturally desirous of an outlet for their agricultural products, and with the New Brunswickers, anxious to revive the Timber Trade, will, we presume, be ready to acquiesce in the suggestion. The other colonies, having more to give and less to expect from the proposed changes, will probably pause and carefully weigh the arguments for and against the admission of American fishermen within the prescribed limits. We offer no opinion at present on this branch of the subject, but we trust that the Delegates from the several Provinces will approach the general question in an enlarged

and liberal spirit. We anticipate much good from the Convention, and that their deliberations will lead to the adoption of such measures as will advance the general prosperity, and elevate and improve the political and social condition of the people of these colonies.

Editor's Department.

MIRAMICHI:

CHATHAM, MONDAY, SEPT. 3, 1849.

The Subscriber having been compelled to consume a large amount of time, and incur considerable expense, in his too often fruitless endeavours to collect his far-spread Outstanding Debts, hereby notifies all persons to whom he is not indebted, and with whom he has not a running account, that orders for advertising in the Gleaner, and for Printing in future, must be accompanied with the CASH otherwise they will not meet with attention,

JAMES A. PIERCE.

CANADA.—Our Canadian exchanges contain the annexed Despatch from the Colonial Secretary, in answer to several petitions to the Home Government, forwarded by public bodies in that colony.

DOWNING STREET, 6th July, 1849.

My Lord—I have deferred acknowledging your Lordship's Despatches, enumerated in the margin, until it should be in my power to communicate to you the final decision of Parliament on the measure submitted to it by her Majesty's subjects, for the removal of those restrictions upon the Commerce of Canada, to be relieved from which is the principal object prayed for in the Petition to her Majesty, transmitted by your Lordship with these Despatches. You will now inform the Petitioners that their Petitions were duly laid before the Queen, and that her Majesty was pleased to receive them very graciously; and you will at the same time express to them the very great satisfaction I feel in being able to communicate to them that by the Act of Parliament to amend the Laws in force for the encouragement of British Shipping and Navigation, which has just been passed, and of which I have the honor to enclose a copy, the prayer of their Petition has been granted by freeing the trade of Canada from the last of the restrictions formerly imposed upon it by the British Legislature.

The Petition of the Montreal Board of Trade prays not only for the repeal of the Navigation Laws; but also that a fixed duty of not less than five shillings a quarter may be imposed upon Wheat imported into this country from any but Colonial Ports, that from Colonial ports being allowed to enter free from duty.

Her Majesty's servants have been unable to recommend to Parliament a compliance with this part of the Petition, as the measure prayed for would have been entirely inconsistent with the principles of that Commercial policy which Parliament has deliberately decided on adopting, and which they believe to be best calculated to promote the permanent interests of the Empire at large, while at the same time they are persuaded that no real necessity exists for endeavouring thus artificially to stimulate the trade of the St. Lawrence, for the sake of which the Petitioners desire that such a duty as I have mentioned should be imposed.

Looking to the remarkable natural advantages which Canada enjoys, to the public works by which those advantages have been improved, to the industry and enterprise which distinguish her rapidly increasing population, I can entertain no doubt that now that full scope will be given for the exertion and energy which will be displayed in turning these advantages to the best account, it will soon be proved by the result, that the Trade of Canada does not require to be artificially fostered, but that, on the contrary, under the stimulus of free competition, it will rise rapidly to a prosperity far more solid and lasting than that which could be created by any fictitious encouragement.

The importance of the relief which will be afforded to the trade of the British Colonies generally, and more especially to that of Canada, by the Act which I now transmit, cannot, I believe, easily be over-estimated; and it is my earnest hope that the inhabitants of Canada will see in this measure a new proof of the desire of Parliament to promote their welfare and to advance their prosperity.

GREY.

HUNGARY.

The noble struggle in which the Hungarian people are now engaged, has called forth the sympathy of the leading men in Britain, and more recently in the United States. Late papers inform us that a great meeting of sympathisers with Hungary, was held at Philadelphia on the 20th ult.—the Hon. G. M. Dallas, late Vice President of the United States, in the chair. Several distinguished individuals addressed the meeting. Resolutions expressing sympathy with the Republic were adopted with great enthusiasm—also an address, invoking aid to the cause of Hungary, and calling upon the United States Govern-

ment to recognize her independence as a Republic.

A similar meeting was to be held at New York, on the 21st ult. The New York Courier and Enquirer, thus alludes to the subject:

A meeting is to be held in the Park this afternoon, of those who sympathise with the Hungarians, in their gallant struggle against the combined powers of Austria and Russia. Our city ought long since to have taken steps to express, in some distinct and emphatic form the sympathy of its citizens with this noble nation. The world has seldom witnessed a more heroic struggle than that now waged on the plains of Hungary. No cause more just was ever defended by determined valor. There is not a single point thus far upon which the Hungarians have not right and justice upon their side. They took up arms, not in rebellion against any lawful government, but in resistance to high handed aggressions and outrages upon their ancient and undisputed rights. Austria throughout this contest has been the aggressor. It was solely to repel her wanton and most unjust assaults upon the constitution and independence of Hungary, that her people, under the lead of the true-hearted patriot Kossuth, took up arms, and appealed to the God of battles. In that contest they were entirely successful. The Austrians had been defeated and driven out of the country; and then with a remorseless cruelty, which gave an additional shade to the treacheries and perjuries of which it had already been guilty, the Austrian government invoked the aid of the Russian Czar.

But the Hungarians did not shrink from even that unequal contest. They prepared, with undaunted heart, to meet their combined enemies, under every disadvantage; and with the prospect of almost certain defeat. Thus far they have nobly maintained their ground. Their Generals, young and comparatively inexperienced as they are, have proved more than a match for the veterans of Russia, while nothing can stand before the burning zeal and desperate valour of the Hungarian people, who at a moment's notice, have converted themselves into soldiers, and gone forth to meet troops, whose very name for years, has made Europe tremble. Whether they can hope for ultimate success or not, may seem doubtful. But they are entitled, in their struggle, by the justice of their cause, by the heroism that defends it, and by the sufferings by which it is consecrated, to the warmest sympathy of every American heart, and to whatever aid that sympathy can bestow. It is by no means impossible that they may prove victorious. They certainly can maintain the struggle for years, and meantime the indignant remonstrance of outraged Christendom may have some effect even upon the remorseless hearts of their oppressors.

The meeting this evening cannot fail to be well attended. We trust that its proceedings will be worthy of the cause and give it renewed hold upon the confidence and sympathy of the nation and the world.

The following extract from a speech of Lord Palmerston in the British Commons, a short time previous to the prorogation of Parliament, shows the strong interest which the Home Government has in the speedy adjustment of this question.

"It is of the utmost importance to Europe that Austria should remain great and powerful; but it is impossible to disguise from ourselves that, if the war is to be fought out, Austria must thereby be weakened; because, on the one hand, if the Hungarians should be successful, and their success should end in the entire separation of Hungary from Austria, it will be impossible not to see that this will be such a dismemberment of the Austrian empire as will prevent Austria from continuing to occupy the great position she has hitherto held among European Powers. If, on the other hand, the war being fought out to the uttermost, Hungary should by superior forces be utterly crushed, Austria, in that battle, will have crushed her own right arm. Every field that is laid waste is an Austrian resource destroyed—every man that perishes upon the field among the Hungarians ranks is an Austrian soldier deducted from the defensive forces of the empire. Laying aside those other most obvious considerations that have been touched upon, as to the result of a successful war, the success of which is brought about by foreign aid,—laying that wholly aside, it is obvious that even the success of Austria, if it is simply a success of force, will inflict a deep wound on the fabric and frame of the Austrian empire. It is therefore much to be desired, not simply on the principle of general humanity, but on the principle of sound policy, and from the most friendly regard to the Austrian empire itself,—it is, I say, devoutly to be wished that this great contest may be brought to a termination by some amicable arrangement between the contending parties, which shall, on the one hand, satisfy the national feelings of the Hungarians, and on the other hand, not to leave Austria another, and a larger Poland within her empire."

IMPORTANT MEETING.—This is the head which the Frederick Head Quarters of Wednesday places over the annexed paragraph. We sincerely hope that the desire expressed by the editor, may be realised. Also, that the doings, if not