THE ISLAND TIMES.

FARMERS' JOURNAL, AND COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER.

Established 1823. Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Saturday, April 16, 1853. New Series. No. 25.

Haszard's Gazette.

GEORGE T. HASZARD, Proprietor and Publisher. Published every Wednesday and Saturday morning Office, South side Queen Square, P. E. Island.

TERMS—Annual Subscription, 15s. Discount for cash in advance.

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UNCLE TOM'S CABIN.

CHAP. XVII.—(*Concluded.*)

The Pursuit.—Phineas Fletcher's Generalship. —The Attack.—What is Heroism !—Discomfiture of Tom Loker.—The First Law of Nature.

A LITTLE while after supper a large covered waggon drew up before the door; the night was clear starlight, and Phineas hopped briskly down from his seat to arrange his passengers. George walked out of the door, with his child on one arm and his wife on the other. His step was firm, his face settled and resolute. Rachel and Simeon came out after them.

"You get out a moment," said Phineas, to those inside, "and let me fix the back of the wagon, there, for the women-folks and the boy."

"Here *are* two buffaloes," said Rachel.

"Make the seats as comfortable as may be; it's hard riding all night."

Jim came out first, and carefully assisted out his old mother, who clung to his arm and looked anxiously about, as if she expected the pursuer every moment.

"Jim, are your pistols all in order?" said George, in a low, firm voice.

"Yes, indeed," said Jim.

"And you've no doubt what you shall do, if they come!"

"I rather think I haven't," said Jim, throwing open his broad chest, and taking a deep breath. "Do you think, I'll let them get mother again!"

During this brief colloquy Eliza had been taking her leave of her kind friend Rachel, and was handed into the carriage by Simeon, and, creeping into the back part with her boy, sat down among the buffalo-skins. The old woman was next handed in and seated, and George and Jim placed on a rough-board seat front of them, and Phineas mounted in front.

"Farewell, my friends !" said Simeon, from without.

"God bless you !" answered all from within.

And the wagon drove off, rattling and jolting over the frozen road.

There was no opportunity for conversation, on account of the roughness of the way and the noise of the wheels. The vehicle therefore rumbled on, through long, dark stretches of woodland, over wide dreary plains, up hills and down valleys, and on, on, on they jogged, hour after hour. The child soon fell asleep, and lay heavily in his mother's lap. The poor, frightened old woman at last forgot her fears; and even Eliza, as the night waned, found all her anxieties insufficient to keep her eyes from closing. Phineas and George, however, the briskest of the company, and beguiled his long drive with whistling certain very un-quaker-like songs as he went on.

But about three o'clock, George's ear caught the hasty and decided click of a horse's hoof coming behind them at some distance, and jogged Phineas by the elbow. Phineas pulled up his horses and listened.

"That must be Michael," he said ! "I think I know the sound of his gallop ;" and he rose up and stretched his head anxiously back over the road.

A man riding in hot haste was now dimly descried at the top of a distant hill.

"There he is, I do believe !" said Phineas. George and Jim both sprang out of the wagon before the horses were fairly going. All stood intensely silent, with their faces turned towards the expected messenger. On he came. Now he went down into a valley, where they could not see him ; but they heard the sharp, hasty tramp, rising nearer and nearer ; at last they saw him emerge on the top of an eminence, within hail.

"Yea, that's Michael !" said Phineas ; and, raising his voice, "Hallon, there, Michael !"

"Phineas ! is that thee?"

"Yea : what news !—are they coming ?"

"Right on behind, eight or ten of them, hot with haste, swearing and foaming like so many wolves !"

And just as he spoke, a breeze brought the faint sound of galloping horsemen towards them.

"In with you, women, boys, *in !*" said Phineas. "If you must fight, wait till I get you a piece a-head. And, with the the word, both jumped in, and Phineas lashed horses to a run, the horseman keeping close beside them. The wagon rattled, jumped, almost flew, over the frozen ground ; but plainer, and still plainer, came the noise of pursuing horsemen behind. The women heard it, and, looking anxiously out, saw, far in the rear, on the brow of a distant hill, a party of men looming up against the red-streaked sky of early dawn. Another hill, and their pursuers had evidently caught sight of their wagon, whose white, cloth-covered top made it conspicuous at some distance, and a loud yell of brutal triumph came forward on the wind. Eliza sickened, and strained her child closer to her bosom ; the old woman prayed and groaned, and George and Jim cleached their pistols with the grasp of despair. The pursuers gained on them fast; the carriage made a sudden turn, and brought them near a ledge of a steep overhanging rock, that rose in an isolated ridge or clump in a large lot, which was, all around it, quite clear and smooth. This isolated pile, or range of rocks, rose up black and heavy against the brightening sky, and seemed to promise shelter and concealment. It was a place well known to Phineas, who had been familiar with the spot in his hunting days ; and it was to gain this point he had been racing his horses.

"Now for it !" said he, suddenly checking his horses, and springing from his seat to the ground. "Out with you, in a twinkling, every one, and up into these rocks with me. Michael, thee tie thy horse to the wagon, and drive ahead to Amariah's, and get him and his boys to come back and talk to these fellows."

In a twinkling they were all out of the carriage.

"There," said Phineas, catching up Harry, "you each of you, see to the women ; and run, now, if you ever did run."

There needed no exhortation. Quicker than we can say it, the whole party were over the fence, making with all speed for the rocks, while Michael, throwing himself from his horse, and fastening the bridle to the wagon began driving it rapidly away.

"Come ahead !" said Phineas, as they reached the rocks ; and now, in the mingled starlight and dawn, the traces of a rude but plainly marked footpath leading up among them : this is one of our old hunting dens. Come up !"

Phineas went before, springing up the rocks like a goat, with the boy in his arms. Jim came second, bearing his trembling old mother over his shoulder, and George and Eliza brought up the rear. A party of horsemen came to the fence, and, with mingled shouts and oaths, were dismounting, to prepare to follow them. A few moments, scrambling brought them to the top of the hill, on the back side, where, between a narrow defile, where only one could walk at a time, till suddenly they came to a rift or chasm more than a yard in breadth, and beyond which lay a pile of rocks, separate from the rest of the ledge, standing full thirty feet high, with its sides steep and perpendicular as those of a castle. Phineas easily leaped the chasm, and sat down the boy on a smooth, flat platform of crisp white moss, that covered the top of the rock.

"Over with you !" he called : "spring, now, once, for your lives !" said he, as one after another sprang across. Several fragments of loose stone formed a kind of breastwork, which sheltered their position from the observation of those below

"Well, here we all are," said Phineas, peeping over the stone breastwork to watch the assailants, who were coming tumultuously up under the rocks. "Let 'em get us, if they can. Whoever comes here has to walk single file between those two rocks, in fair range of your pistols, boys, d'ye see?"

"I do see," said George ; and now, as this matter is out, let us take all the risk, and do all the fighting."

"Thee's quite welcome to do the fighting, George," said Phineas, chewing some checkerberry leaves as he spoke ; "but I may have the fun of looking on, I suppose. But see, these fellows are kinder debating down there, and looking up, like hens when they are going to fly up to the roost. I'm the best better give you a word of advice, before they come up, just to tell 'em handsomely, they'll be shot if they do!"

The party beneath, now more apparent in the light of the dawn, consisted of their old acquaintances, Tom Loker and Marks, with two constables, and a posse consisting of such rowdies at the last tavern as could be engaged by a little brandy to go and help the fun of trapping a set of niggers.

"Well, Tom, yer coons are fairly treed," said one.

"Yes, I see 'em go up right here," said Tom; "and here's a path. I'm for going right up. They can't jump down in a hurry, and it won't take long to ferret 'em out."

"But, Tom, they might fire at us from behind the rocks," said Marks. "That would be ugly, you know."

"Ugh!" said Tom, with a sneer. "Always for saving your skin, Marks! No danger! Niggers are too plaguy scared !"

"I don't know why I *shouldn't* save my skin," said Marks. "It's the best I've got; and niggers *do* fight like the devil, sometimes."

At this moment George appeared on the top of a rock above them, and, speaking in a calm, clear voice, said—

"Gentlemen, who are you down there, and what do you want!"

"We want a party of runaway niggers," said Tom Loker. "One George Harris, and Eliza Harris, and their son, and Jim Seldon, and an old woman. We've got the officers here, and is warrant to take 'em up and take 'em back to 'em, too. D'ye hear ! An't you George Harris, that belongs to Mr. Harris, of Shelby county, Kentucky!"

"I am George Harris. A Mr. Harris, of Kentucky, did call me his property. But now I'm a free man, standing on God's free soil ; and my wife and my child I claim as mine. Jim and the mother are free. We have arms to defend ourselves, and we mean to do it. You can come up, if you like ; but the first one of you that comes within the range of our bullets is a dead man, and the next, and the next ; and so on till the last."

"Oh, come ! come?" said a short, puffy man, stepping forward, and blowing his nose as he did so. "Young man this an't no kind of talk at all for you. You see, we're officers of justice. We've got the law on our side, and the power, and so forth ; so you'd better give up peaceably, you see ; for you'll certainly have to give up at last."

"I know very well that you've got the law on your side, and the power," said George bitterly.

"You mean to take my wife to sell in New Orleans, and put my boy like a colt in a trader's pen, and send Jim's old mother to the brute that whipped and abused her before, because he couldn't abuse her son. You want to send Jim and his mother to be whipped and tortured, and ground down under the heels of them that you call masters ; and your laws *will* bear you out in it—more shame for you and them ! But you haven't got us. We don't own your laws ; we don't own your country ; we stand here as free, under God's sky, as you are ; and, by the great God that made us, we'll fight for our liberty till we die."

George stood out in fair sight on the top of the rock, as he made his declaration of independence ; the glow of dawn gave a flush to his swarthy cheek, and bitter indignation and despair gave fire to his dark eye ; and, as if appealing from man to the justice of God, he raised his hand to heaven as he spoke.

If it had been only a Hungarian youth, now, bravely defending in some mountain fastness the retreat of fugitives escaping from Austria into America, this would have been sublime heroism ; but as it was a youth of African descent, defending the retreat of fugitives through America into Canada, of course we are too well instructed and patriotic to see any heroism in it; and if any of our readers do, they must do it on their own private responsibility. When despairing Hungarian fugitives make their way, against all the search-warrants and authorities of their lawful government, to America, press and political cabinet ring with applause and welcome. When despairing African fugitives do the same thing, it is—what *is* it!

Be it as it may, it is certain that the attitude, eye, voice, manner of the speaker, for a moment struck the party below to silence. There is something in boldness and determination that for a time hushes even the rudest nature. Marks and the only one who remained wholly untouched. He was deliberately cocking his pistol, and in the momentary silence that followed George's speech, he fired at him.

"Ye see, ye get just as much for him dead as take in. Another bad shot," said he, as he wiped his pistol on his coat sleeve.

George sprang backward—Eliza uttered a shriek— the ball had passed close to his hair, had nearly grazed the cheek of his wife, and stuck in the tree above.

"It's nothing, Eliza," said George, quickly.

"The'd better keep out of sight, with thy speechifying," said Phineas ; "they're mean scamps."

"Now, Jim," said George, "look that your pistols are all right and watch that pass with me. The first one shows himself I fire at ; you take the second, and so on : it won't do, you know, to waste two shots on one,"

"But what if you don't hit?"

"I *shall* hit," said George, coolly.

"Good ! Now, there's stuff in that fellow," muttered Phineas, between his teeth.

The party below, after Marks had fired, stood, for a moment, rather undecided.

"I think you must have hit some on 'em," said one of the men. "I heard a squeal !"

"I'm going right up for one," said Tom. "I never was afraid of niggers, and I an't going to be now. Who goes after ?" he said, springing up the rocks.

George heard the words distinctly. He drew up his pistol, examined it, pointed it towards that point in the defile where the first man would appear.

One of the most courageous of the party followed Tom, and, the way being thus made, the whole party began pushing up the rock—the hindermost pushing the front ones faster than they would have gone of themselves. On they came, and in a moment the burly form of Tom appeared in sight, almost at the verge of the chasm.

George fired—the shot entered his side; but though wounded he would not retreat, but, with a yell like that of a wild beast, he was leaping right across the chasm to the party.

"Friend," said Phineas, suddenly to the front, and meeting him with a push from his long arms, "thee isn't wanted here."

Down he fell into the chasm, crackling down among trees, bushes, logs, loose stones, till he lay, bruised and groaning, thirty feet below. The fall might have killed him, had it not been broken and moderated by the clothes catching in the branches of a large tree; but he came down with some force, however—more than was at all agreeable or convenient.

"Lord, help us! they are perfect devils!" said Marks, heading the retreat down the rocks with much more of a will, than he had joined the ascent, while all the party came tumbling precipitated after him—the constables carefully, blowing and puffing in a very energetic manner.

"I say fellers," said Marks, "you jist go round and pick up Tom, there, while I run and get on to my hoss, and be off. I wouldn't have you;" and without minding the hootings and jeers of his company, Marks was as good as his word, and was soon seen galloping away.

"War ever such a sneaking varmint!" said one of the men. "To come on his business, and he clear out and leave us this yer way!"

"Well, we must pick up that feller," said another. "Cuss me, if I much care whether he is dead or alive."

The men, led by the groans of Tom, scrambled and crackled through stumps, logs and bushes, to where that hero lay groaning and sweating with alternate exhalations.

"Ye keep it a-going pretty loud, Tom," said one. "Ye much hurt!"

"Don't know. Get me up, can't ye! Blast that infernal Quaker! If it had not been for him, I'd a pitched some on'em down here, to see how they liked it."

With much labour and groaning, the fallen hero was assisted to rise; and, with one holding him up under each shoulder, they got him as far as the horses.

"If you could only get me a mile back to that are tavern, you see, I'd get a handkerchief or something to stuff into this place, and stop this infernal bleeding."

George looked over the rocks, and saw them trying to lift the burly form of Tom into the saddle. After many fruitless and ineffectual attempts, he reeled, and fell heavily to the ground.

"Oh, I hope he isn't killed!" said Eliza, who, with all the party, stood watching the proceedings.

"Why not!" said Phineas. "Serves him right."

"Because after death comes the judgment," said Eliza.

"Yes," said the old woman who had been groaning and praying, in her Methodist fashion, during all the encounter, "it is an awful case for the poor critter's soul."

"On my word, they're leaving him, I do believe," said Phineas.

It was true; for, after some appearance of irresolution and consultation, the whole party got on their horses and rode away. When they were quite out of sight, Phineas began to bestir himself.

"Well, we must go down and walk a piece," he said. "I told Michael to go forward and bring help, and he'll be along back here with the wagon ; but we shall have to walk a piece along the road, I reckon, to meet them. The Lord grant he be along soon! It's early in the day : there won't be much travel afoot yet a while; we an't much more than two miles from our stopping-place. If the road hadn't been so rough last night, we could have outrun 'em entirely."

As the party neared the fence, they discovered in the distance, along the road, their own wagon coming back, accompanied by some men on horseback.

"Well, now, there's Michael, and Stephen, and Amariah," exclaimed Phineas, joyfully. "Now we *are* made—as safe as if we'd got there."

"Well, do stop, then," said Eliza, "and do something for that poor man ; he's groaning dreadfully."

"It would be no more than Christian," said George ; let's take him up and carry him on."

"And doctor him up again, poor fellow, I suppose!" said Phineas ; "pretty well, that! Well, I don't care, if we do. Here let's have a look at him!" and Phineas, who in the course of his hunting and backwoods life, had acquired some rude experience of surgery, kneeled down by the wounded man, and began a careful examination of his condition.

"Marks," said Tom, feebly ; "is that you, Marks?"

"No, I reckon 't an't, friend," said Phineas. "Much Marks cares for thee, if his own skin's safe. He's off long ago."

"I believe I'm done for," said Tom. "The cussed sneaking dog, to leave me to die alone ! My poor old mother always told me t'would be so."

"La, sakes ! jist hear the poor critter. He's got a mammy, now," said the old negress. "I can't help kinder pityin' on him."

"Softly, softly ; don't thee snap and snarl, friend," said Phineas, as Tom winced and pushed his hand away. "Thee has no chance, unless I stop the bleeding." And Phineas busied himself with making some off-hand surgical arrangements for his patient, which interfered, and such as could be mustered in the company.

"You pushed me down there," said Tom faintly.

"Well, if I hadn't, thee would have pushed us down, the sees, said Phineas, as he stooped to apply his bandage. "There, there—let me fix this bandage. We mean well to thee ; we bear no malice. Thee shall be taken to a house where they'll nurse thee-first rate—as well as thy own mother could."

Tom groaned, and shut his eyes. In men of his class, a sudden resolution are rarely a physical matter, and ooze out with the flowing of the blood ; and the gigantic fellow really looked piteous in his helplessness. The other wagon was soon seen coming down the road, out of the wagon. The buffalo-skins, doubled in fours, were spread all along one side, and four men, with great difficulty, lifted the heavy form of Tom into it. Before he was gotten in, he fainted entirely. The old negress, in the abundance of her compassion, sat down on the bottom, and took his head in her lap. Eliza, George and Jim, bestowed themselves, as well as they could, in the remaining space, and the whole party set forward.

"What do you think of him ?" said George, who sat by Phineas, in front.

"Well, it's only a pretty deep flesh-wound ; but then tumbling and scratching down that place didn't help him much. It has bled pretty freely—pretty much greased him out, courage and all; but he'll get over it, and may be learn a thing or two by it."

"I'm glad to hear you say so," said George. "It would always be a heavy thought to me, if I'd caused his death, even in a just cause."

"Yes," said Phineas, "it's killing is an ugly operation, any way they'll fix it, man or beast. I've been a great hunter in my day, and I tell thee, I've seen a buck that was shot down and a dying, look him away as softly with his eye, that it really most made a feller feel wicked for killing on him ; and human creatures is a more serious consideration yet, bein', as thy wife says, that the judgment comes on 'em after death. So I don't know, as our people's notions on these matters is too strict ; and, considerin' how I was raised, I fell in with them pretty considerably."

"I'm glad shall you do with this poor fellow?" said George.

"Oh, carry him along to Amariah's. There's old Grandmam Stephens there—Dorcas, they call her—she's a most amazin' nurse. She takes to nursing real natural, and an't never better suited than when she gets a sick body to tend. We may reckon on turning him over to her for a fortnight or so."

A ride of about an hour more brought the party to a neat farm-house, where the weary travellers were received to an abundant breakfast. Tom Loker was soon carefully deposited in a much cleaner and softer bed than he had ever been in the habit of occupying. His wound was carefully dressed and bandaged, and he lay languidly opening and shutting his eyes on the white window curtains and gayly-gliding figures of his sick room, like a weary child. And here, for the present, we shall take our leave of one party.

A MODEL COUNTY.—Potter County, Pa., where no intoxicating liquor is sold, is attracting the attention of persons settling in Pennsylvania, as a place where life and property will be more secure, and the County taxes lighter, than elsewhere in that state. The Coroner's fees last year amounted to fifty cents. The expenses of Philadelphia County, caused by intoxicating liquores, would go far to purchase Potter County out and out.

THE labour of removing so ponderous a column as Cleopatra's Needle to Old England will be the most costly *needle-work* ever heard of.

COLONIAL LEGISLATURE.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER,

31st MARCH, 1853.

Debate on Motion for the Second Reading of the Treasury Note Bill.

Hon. Mr. HOLL.—I beg to second the motion of my hon. friend (Mr. Heusley); but before I offer any remarks of my own on the proposition under consideration, I must take a retrospective view of the circumstances which attended the agitation of a similar measure when it appeared before the Council in 1846; for I find that their Honors who now advocate a further issue of Treasury Notes, were then dismetrically opposed to such a measure. But in order to bring the matter more clearly before your Honors, I cannot do better than quote, from the reported speeches, the precise language by which they supported the opinions they then entertained on this important question. In the *Royal Gazette* of the 7th April, 1846 (in which the proceedings of the Council are reported, as they occurred on the 27th March, 1846, when the Treasury Note Bill was brought under its notice), I find his Honor the present Attorney General, on moving the Order of the Day, viz., "the consideration of the Resolution of the House of Assembly on the subject of addressing Her Majesty praying that Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to consent to the passing of an Act authorizing an additional issue of Treasury Notes;" whereupon Mr. Young opened the discussion by reading the Resolution of the House of Assembly, as follows:

"Resolved, That a Committee be appointed, to join a Committee of this Legislative Council, to prepare and report the draft of an Address to the Queen, praying that Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to grant her consent to the passing of an Act authorizing the additional issue of Treasury Notes, to the amount of £15,000, for the purpose of liquidating an equal amount of Treasury Warrants, to be redeemed within the period of ten years, out of the general Revenue of the Colony."

His Honor then proceeded at great length to denounce the measure as expressed in that Resolution. His own words are these: "Now, in the first place, I beg to observe, that it is, I presume, pretty well known, that in consequence of the present excessive issue of Treasury Notes, the currency is depreciated 20 per cent. below the specified 20 per cent. in their nominal value; and if the proposed additional issue were to be made, I believe they would become depreciated to from 22½ to 25 per cent. And in his Honor continues the same strain in opposition to an issue of paper not redeemable in specie, until he touches on the subject of Treasury Warrants, when he uses the following words:

"It has been alleged, in another place, that if the proposed additional issue of £15,000 were made, and applied in the payment of that amount of Treasury Warrants, no interest on the same would be saved annually to the Colony. But this position is, I think, untenable, for the reasons I have already assigned, and would not be found to produce that effect in its practical operation. And if these Notes were funded, as the Resolution contemplates, where would be the saving, if we were obliged to pay the interest thereon upon the Resolution with rather a suspicious eye. It appears to me to bear something of this character: the Government owe £15,000, secured, we will say, for the sake of argument, by a Bond. The holder demands payment. The Government says, we cannot pay you in cash; but we will give you our Promissory Notes for the sum due, bearing an amount of 6 or £1, just as suits our convenience. Put this in the light of a private transaction, and then enquire, how any of your Honors would feel, if such a proposition were made to you. I feel it would excite only scorn and derision. It is true, you might agree to it, if the small Notes would be worth to you the amount appearing on the face of them; but if the Treasury Notes to be already depreciated 20 per cent., and that there was a great probability of their being soon depreciated 25 per cent. in value, you would reject the offer, and might characterize the proposition as any thing rather than an honest one. I have often thought that it was a disgrace to our Island, that our Notes would only circulate to its limits; and in a circumstance which ought not to exist; because, as I said before, we are well able to pay 20s. in the pound; and if the present system were totally changed, or partially altered, our Notes would pass as freely in the neighbouring Colonies as their Notes pass in ours." His Honor, after some further remarks, which I need not read, concluded by moving the Resolution:

"Resolved, That the Legislative Council do desire a Conference with the House of Assembly on the subject matter of addressing Her Majesty praying that Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to grant her consent to the passing of an Act authorizing an additional issue of Treasury Notes, to the amount of £15,000, for the purpose of liquidating an equal amount of Treasury Warrants, to be redeemed within the period of ten years, out of the general Revenue of the Colony. That the following reasons be not appended to the Address, viz.:" Address, I presume to the Committee: First, because the House, on mature consideration of the subject, are of opinion, that a further issue of Treasury Notes, which the Treasury has no means of redeeming in specie, would create a further depreciation in the currency of this Island, which is already depreciated to 20 per cent. below that of the neighbouring Colonies. Secondly, because the giving effect to the proposal contained in the Resolution of the House of Assembly, for applying the Notes to be issued to the paying off of an equal amount of Treasury Warrants would, in the opinion of the House, not only be productive of great injustice to the holders of such Warrants,—inasmuch as it would be compelling them to accept payment of such Warrants in a currency depreciated below its present value, and thereby occasion much individual loss,—but would also tend to destroy public confidence in the integrity and credit of the Government."

The Hon. Mr. HOLL continued—I think I have stated enough to show that his honor's opinions were at that day, and I now, with your permission will take a review of the opinions of His Honor Mr. Swabey, who has just moved the second reading of the Treasury Note Bill, and whose motion I have also seconded on the former occasion, the motion of the Hon. Mr. Young, and expressed himself highly favorable to the views of his colleagues: but I will give you his own words, and then there can be no mistake about the matter. His Honor Mr. Swabey commenced by "cease your Honors, I rise to second the motion which has been so ably introduced by my hon. and learned friend." His hon. then enters into certain explanations and alludes to Despatches of Lord Stanley, expressly written in opposition to any further issue of Treasury Notes "not payable in specie on demand" and after commenting on the same at some length, his honor then expresses himself in the following terms: (see report of the hon. Mr. S's Speech in 1846) "The Currency of this Colony as has been shewn in a very clear manner by my hon. and learned friend who has just sat down, in consequence of the over-issue of Treasury Notes unredeemable in