

relation to it. As the currency now ranges, we all perfectly understand the nature of our engagements to each other; and there is as much simplicity in our transactions as if the whole were carried on in sterling money. Where is the skilful financier who can take upon him the responsibility of assuring to us the same pleasant state of things after a supposed restoration? and would it be wise or prudent to entangle ourselves in the complex regulations and minute arrangements which it would be necessary to make, to give it a just and equal operation, when the principal end we ought to keep in view (the establishment of a sound and comparatively unvarying medium of exchange) may be obtained with equal advantage without it.

I am aware that many persons entertain a sort of bigoted preference to the Halifax standard of the currency, and appear to think that if that rate could be restored, everything would become easy and flourishing; but it is not easy to discover by what influence this idea is so prevalent. Persons who have given much consideration to commercial affairs, hold it to be of great importance that the medium of exchange should be so regulated that the calculations incident to commercial transactions should be as simple and easily settled as possible, by which much time and trouble is saved to all parties. In this respect our present rate is certainly preferable to that of Halifax. If our dealings were entirely confined to Nova Scotia, there might be some reason for regulating our currency by it; but as those dealings are now sufficiently various, and are likely to become more so, our attention should rather be directed to our relations with a sterling currency than to any subsidiary one, especially as it may be hoped that we are about to prepare the way for the adoption of a system infinitely superior to any that is at present existing in any of these colonies.

Again, could we in the progress of restoration repair the losses inflicted by the depreciation to the real sufferers thereby, there would be some motive for encountering the abstruse enquiries which must necessarily accompany such a movement (if it is to be accomplished in a just and equitable spirit); but such a separation is manifestly impossible.

It is also very certain that in every change of value the great sufferers are those who are least able to sustain it. The Merchant and Sterekeeper quickly accommodate their dealings and prices so as to correspond with the varying phases of the currency, whilst the resident in the distant districts of the country but slowly acquires the information necessary to the protection of his interests, and often suffers materially thereby. The unwarly and the ignorant become the prey of the cunning and crafty at every change, and thus the elevation of the currency after any considerable period of depreciation is too often only acquiring a new direction to injustice.

It may also be observed, that the currencies of the neighbouring colonies are not in exact unison, but have frequent variations in their relative value, which is a sufficient indication that they are not in so sound a state that we should seek to regulate our currency upon the same principles and by the same standard. It was not to be expected that his Lordship, in a Despatch, would enter into all the particulars here adverted to; but I trust that those who may have hereafter to deal with the subject, will give them that considerate attention which so grave a matter deserves.

His Lordship then assumes that the course likely to be adopted, is the fixing the standard of the currency at its present point of depreciation; and afterwards enters upon the measures by which the intended change is to be safely introduced. There are stated to be the passing of a law authorizing the proper officer to call in all outstanding Warrants, and to discharge the holders of them by paying to them a like amount in Treasury Notes—these notes being declared to be a legal tender, and also made exchangeable for coin at the office of the manager of the currency account (which account is to be kept entirely distinct from the Treasury account), upon the application of the holder—or in other words, making them payable on demand.

To enable the officer of the currency to meet the demands that may possibly be made for coin by those who have payments to make abroad, or who may require it for their ordinary purposes, his Lordship suggests that a sum of money may be raised by loan, or otherwise to be placed in the hands of the currency officer for that purpose.

Lord Grey seems to think that a restriction at the commencement of this operation—limiting the demands for specie in exchange for Notes at the office of the currency, to sums not lower in amount than £50, might be of some service in facilitating its success.

The subjoined extract of a Despatch addressed to the Governor of New Zealand is, no doubt, intended to afford additional information, and to supply hints for the construction of a scheme suitable to the wants and circumstances of this Island. The whole requires careful consideration, for it is of the utmost importance that the question should be dealt with very discreetly, that no unnecessary haste or too sudden an enlargement of the issues should mar and impede the success of a project which, if carried out, is likely to have a most favourable influence upon all our future undertakings. There is every reason to be thankful for this evidence of the attention of the Colonial Office to our Island affairs, and the very best return we can make is to cultivate the suggestions contained in these Despatches, and endeavour to bring them into useful operation.

There is one point which it is very necessary we should be able to come to a right conclusion upon, at as early a period as possible, and that is the amount of paper circulation which it may be safe to experiment upon at the outset. His Lordship's Despatch seems to propose the combined amount of Notes and Warrants now in issue. By the Report of the Special Committee upon the Public Accounts, on the 20th January, 1847, we have the following as the amount of Treasury Warrants and Notes in circulation or afloat:

Treasury Warrants,	£29,317 11 8½
Do. Notes,	11,500 0 0
Total,	£40,817 11 8½

Upon the completion of the operation we should, therefore, have a circulation of Notes payable on demand amounting to about £40,000, which I think may be deemed to be more than an ample provision for the present demands of the community; and if so, requires the strictest investigation and enquiry before it is adopted.

I am, Sir, your humble Servant,

CAMBIATORE.

#### THE NEWS FROM EUROPE.

The English Mail, brought by the "Hibernia," reached Charlottetown on Wednesday last—bringing intelligence of a painfully important character, the principal part of which may be ranged under three heads, viz: the continuance of the commercial panic in different parts of Europe—the prevalence of destitution and crime in ill-fated and misgoverned Ireland—and the enactment of the bloody drama so long in preparation for the cantons of the Sonderbund in Switzerland. Forty-three houses in various parts of the continent, have yielded to commercial embarrassments, since the last English Mail,—making a fearful addition to the long list of calamities which an unsound system has brought upon the whole Commerce of the Old World, fraught with incalculable distress and decrepitude—blasting the fondest hopes—thwarting the most earnest struggles of the high as well as the low.

The Imperial Parliament entered on the business of the Session on the 23d November, and loud and long has been the discussion of the new as well as the old legislators, as to the best means of relieving the commercial embarrassments, and imparting once again an impulse to the spirit of Trade—of subduing crime and insubordination in Ireland, and feeding the starving millions of that unhappy country. For the one, enquiries were to be made into the causes of the panic, and how far it has been affected by the laws regulating the issue of bank notes payable on demand; for the other, a Coercion Bill was to be brought under the consideration of Parliament. Speculation and enquiry were the only results of the several days' debates; so that the precise nature of the measures which might be ultimately adopted by Parliament, could not be known when the Mail left England. On the discussion which occurred in the House of Commons relatively to commercial affairs, a London contemporary remarks:

But Ireland is not the only topic on which the debates have turned. The commercial distress, though excluded from the first debate in the House of Commons, has had its full swing in the House of Lords, under the auspices of Lord Stanley; and Lord George Bentinck, being primed for the occasion, and having lost his opportunity in the debate on the Address, gave full vent to his statesmanship the next evening. Both these noble lords wandered over a huge field of politics, and laboured hard to find some tangible ground of opposition. It was all in vain! Nothing can be more puerile, empty, and jejune than the statements they paraded before the country. They would have us believe that the commercial distress has been owing to free trade! and if a Protectionist policy means anything, it means that in a time of famine corn should be kept out of the country in order

that gold may be kept in, and the money market protected from its unpleasant fluctuations. There is not much danger of men with this capacity of intellect shaking the stability of any Minister, or of accomplishing anything higher than a little temporary obstruction. On the Bank Charter Act the Protectionists seem rather at a loss, their great leader, Lord Stanley, having been a party to its enactment in 1844! Another leading question also divides them. The *Post* gravely announces that the party have resolved to treat Jewish emancipation as their forefathers—Liverpool and Castlereagh—treated Catholic emancipation, that is, leave it an open question.

The character of the civil war in Switzerland calls forth the following observations:

Out of doors, our attention is naturally turned to the affairs of Switzerland. At present very little is known with any exactness of detail. We announced last week the taking and capitulation of Friburg; but what has followed the surrender is, as usual, a matter of grave dispute. The garrison has altogether disappeared; having, according to one account, cut its way to Lucerne, and according to another, dispersed and taken refuge in Neuchâtel. The conduct of the Federal troops in Friburg appears, beyond a doubt, to have been infamous. The ferocious Radical soldiers have treated the stipulations made by their Conservative officers with the utmost contempt, and given the town up to pillage; plundering houses, profaning churches, ransacking the colleges, and treating the surrounding villages even worse than the city itself. These facts are denied by the Radical papers, and no doubt would be denied by Mr. Grote, if he were to write a history of this civil war; but, unfortunately, they are put beyond a doubt by the 'Order of the Day' of the Federal Colonel, Rilliet, who declares that 'the Diet's orders and those of the General have been unfortunately forgotten,' and denounces 'those who in order to gratify their passions would compromise the army by making it the instrument of their personal rancour. He adds, that 'the time of indulgence has passed, and all such belonging to the army as forgot their duty shall be rigorously chastised according to law.' The posture of things in and about Lucerne is quite uncertain; but the Queen's Speech establishes the fact that the five Powers are to use their efforts by a friendly mediation to tranquilize Switzerland. We need hardly doubt that the Jesuits both in Lucerne and Friburg will be made the first victims of this 'friendly' measure. We trust in God the soldiers of the Sonderbund may have had an occasion to chastise their lawless and brutal invaders before the polluting 'mediation' touches them.

#### MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.

"A Mechanic" writes us a very long and very angry letter on the subject of certain proceedings at a late Meeting of the Mechanics' Institute. In the main points urged by "a Mechanic" we fully and unreservedly concur, but we fear that his indignation has sadly triumphed over his judgment, and urged him into the commission of one or two palpable errors which, in calmer moments, he cannot fail to perceive. We are sorry that we are compelled to endorse nearly his first observation—that an attempt is evident to wrest the Mechanics' Institute from the hands of those for whose benefit it was established, and to place it under the controul of a few individuals—principally young men, who are unfortunately more remarkable for their vanity and presumption than they are for the splendour of their talents, or the extent of their erudition. But this is not the theme on which our correspondent lavishes his indignant, and, indeed, eloquent denunciations. It is—the manifestations of party and political rancour in the management of the general business of an Institution which professes no regard or consideration for the political feelings and opinions of all classes in the community. "A Mechanic" avers that on the last night of meeting, in the selection of Office-bearers, the disreputable scheme of excluding from every petty office, persons who are known to advocate liberal views in politics, was successfully carried into operation,—and the avowment he has supported by arguments and proofs which appear to us wholly incontrovertible; and were it not for the freedom with which our correspondent uses the names of several individuals, we might be inclined to submit, at least, this part of his letter to public consideration. As it is, we do not think that any great advantage would be likely to arise from its publication. If the real objects of the Institute are thus to be lost sight of, for the sake of nursing the egregious vanity of some young men, who have little or no sympathies in common with Mechanics, the latter are themselves to blame—for had they displayed hitherto a little more zeal in furthering the objects of the Institute, the persons of whom "a Mechanic" complains would have been obliged to keep their proper level. The political animus which is alleged to have characterized the proceedings of the last Meeting, is certainly the strongest ground of complaint that can be preferred against the officers of the Institute. However ardent a few individuals may struggle to impress the public mind with a notion of their vast importance, as literary and scientific men, they only render themselves contemptible and shake general confidence in the utility of the Institute, by allowing their political feelings and antipathies to colour their actions within the walls of an Institution established for the dissemination of scientific knowledge and the encouragement of literary pursuits.