SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

THE ELECTION FOR THE SOUTHERN PROVINCE.

(FROM THE ARGUS, OCT. 5.)

The defeat of Mr. POWER for the Southern Province by a comparatively unknown, and certainly, so far as can be learnt from his demeanour in public, not a very intelligent or even intelligible competitor, is a warning to the gentlemen of the Legislative Council to set their House in order. The public are almost unanimous as to the necessity for a reform of the Upper House; and there is no doubt that to this, more than to any other cause, must be attributed the victory of Mr. PETTETT. In every other respect he was certainly the less eligible candidate. The late member was a gentleman highly esteemed in the community for uprightness of conduct, independence of character, and, in some points, liberality of opinion. On the whole, he was an excellent specimen of the class to which he belonged; and, if it is desirable that the Upper House should not be altogether an echo of the Lower, he was perhaps no worse a member of it for being a sturdy obstructive to some of the measures which the Lower House has at various times attempted to pass.

Yet Mr. POWER has been defeated, and by a majority so large as scarcely to leave a doubt as to the cause of his defeat. Even in the conservative district of Brighton, he could not succeed in polling so many votes as his opponent. Nothing could be more significant of the temper of the electors, in fact, than this election. On the one side, we have a gentleman of the strongest personal claims, and of more than average capacity, who had served the country honestly and fearlessly according to his lights, during the ten years he has been in the House. On the other side, there is somebody whom, if we may judge of him by his reported speeches, it would be too high praise to say that he is a sort of bad burlesque upon Mr. WEMYSS JOBSON. Of PETTETT the country knows nothing; and PETTETT has been singularly unfortunate in his attempts to enlighten the country. Yet PETTETT is able to promise a reform of the Upper House, with many other good things; and therefore PETTETT is preferred to the gentleman who will promise nothing. The fact is ominous of the fate which awaits some more of the old members now before their constituencies for re-election; and, indeed, we perceive that Mr. HENRY MILLER, with a prudent alacrity, has already abjured some inconvenient opinions, and is ready to swallow anything which his constituents wish. This may not be very magnanimous, but there is no doubt this is what the candidates must do who desire to retain the seats they have held in the Upper House. The public have determined that the constitution of the Upper House shall be altered; and however rude a shape this determination may assume, the members will do well to respect it, and to take their reform in hand themselves, if they do not want a further accession of such reforming agents as Mr. PETTETT, of the Southern Province.

THE DOCK AT WILLIAMSTOWN.

(FROM THE ARGUS, OCT. 3.)

Under the head "Contracts Accepted," in last Tuesday's *Gazette*, was an announcement which, though it probably attracted little attention from the general public, may be regarded as destined to form an important landmark in the history of Victoria. These were the words to which we refer—"Towards constructing a graving-dock at Williamstown (portion of contract), £12,000, THOMAS GLAISTER and Co." We need not remind the readers of *The Argus* that the necessity of a graving-dock in Hobson's Bay has been persistently urged upon public notice in these columns for nearly two years, and that Williamstown has always been pointed out as the proper site for such a work. The present contract is for a portion of the sum of £25,000, voted by Parliament on February 4 in the present year, "towards the erection of a graving-dock at Williamstown." Mr. VERDON then stated that the estimated cost of the dock was £100,000, and that it would accommodate the largest vessels which came to the port. It was also stated that the dock would be so constructed as to admit of its extension at a future time if the necessity arose, and that the vote then asked for—£25,000—was the maximum amount which could be expended this year. The saving of actual loss, and the great advantages—prospective as well as immediate—which must follow the completion of this much-needed work, are so obvious as scarcely to need enumeration. We have always held it to be one of the most striking facts in evidence of the extraordinary natural and commercial advantages of Melbourne, that she has been able to maintain her position as the emporium of the Australasian colonies, despite this great want. Having become what we are without the necessary conveniences for the splendid shipping which crowds our port, it is perhaps ungracious to talk of what we might have been had we been provided with proper dock accommodation. Sydney, far our inferior as a trading city, has for years had three docks. She has MORT's—rented by the Peninsular and Oriental Company for £6,000 a-year—the Government Dock, and the dock on Cockatoo Island. Melbourne as yet affords no facilities for the repair of the magnificent vessels sent to her port but the Government slip at Williamstown. It is little to the credit of the commercial enterprize of this community, or to the foresight of our Government, that we should still be without this great desideratum. Mr. M'CULLOCH, when the vote was under consideration in February last, pointed out—as we had done some eight months before—that there was no doubt, if the colony had been as well provided as Sydney—if she "had possessed a dock years ago"—the Peninsular and Oriental Company would have made Melbourne the depôt for their steamers, instead of Sydney. And our readers need not be reminded of the wide-spread advantages this would bring to the trade and commerce of Melbourne. It was estimated by Captain M'MECKAN in 1860, that the loss to this colony, "in disbursements alone," by the Peninsular and Oriental Company going to Sydney, has not been far short of £100,000; and other losses daily follow the absence in our port of the accommodation so many vessels need after the long voyages they make to reach us. Many of these we have long since instanced. Mr. M'CULLOCH, when the vote was carried, referred to the case of the *Lightning*. This ship struck outside the Heads, on the rock to which she gave her name, and which has since been removed. Had Melbourne possessed a dock large enough to accommodate her, she would have returned into port. But as it was, the captain preferred running the risk of proceeding to sea without ascertaining what injury his ship had suffered, or removing the natural apprehensions of his passengers. The dock, Mr. M'CULLOCH said, will accommodate a vessel fifty feet larger than the *Great Britain*. It has been estimated, and the estimate is justified by the receipts at Sydney, that the revenue will amount to six per cent. upon the outlay. But this Mr. M'CULLOCH believes to be too high an estimate. If it pays three per cent., however, he considers the return will be very satisfactory. It will, in all probability, he considers, have a tendency to reduce the charge for insurance on vessels sailing to and from Melbourne, and will "certainly offer inducements to the largest and best ships of all nations to make voyages to this port."

We have clearly begun to retrieve our position—to supply our glaring deficiencies in this matter none too soon. The large vessels now being added to the Australian trade will bring those deficiencies into a prominence more glaring than ever. The strides iron is making in supplanting wood greatly increase the urgency of the case. Iron vessels, we need hardly remind our readers, foul much more rapidly than those built of wood; and a prudent shipowner will, as a matter of course, avoid sending his vessels to a port in which, after a voyage of 16,000 miles, they will not find the necessary accommodation for overhauling or repair. The Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers have, we believe—in order to insure speed—to be cleaned every voyage. When we have a fortnightly mail we shall have greater need than ever of dock accommodation. There can be little doubt that in any new contract with the company, we could insure the steamers remaining here if we were ready to receive them. The benefits this port would reap if she were the terminus for the mail steamers are many and various. The sale of stores, and the large amount of labour employed by these steamers, will at once occur to the minds of all business men, as affording a quite sufficient reason for our urging activity in the matter, did none other exist. But the harvest we should reap from affording a hospitable refuge to the mail steamers, would form but a small portion of the prospective benefits we should certainly acquire by thus fostering the growth of our port, and adding to the strength of the right it already has to be the depôt of all the colonies.

We have so frequently expressed our conviction that Williamstown is the best site for a dock, and a stone dock the most profitable kind of work upon which to expend our money, that we need now only congratulate the colony upon the course pursued by Government in this matter, and rejoice that a great impediment to our commercial progress, and a sad stigma upon our enterprise as a community, will shortly be removed.

TEA IN INDIA.

(FROM THE ARGUS, SEPT. 30.)

The history of tea cultivation in India affords a striking illustration of the progress a "novel industry" may make in a country where climatic and other attendant influences are such as to justify its introduction. The value of the exports of tea from India in the last ten years has risen in the following proportion:—1842, £17,244; 1852, £59,220; and in 1862, £192,242. But we find, from a recent writer on the subject, that this statement does not at all accurately show the full amount of production. The produce of the north-western provinces commands so high a price upon the spot, that a very small proportion of the whole is exported; and the Assam Company sold last year 20,000lb. to the commissariat at Calcutta. And yet the exportation to England is increasing so fast that the trade in London have recently found it necessary to appoint distinct days for the public sales of Indian teas. The circumstances under which the cultivation of the tea plant, and its preparation, "were first brought about," says the writer upon whom we rely for the facts we are about to give, "are very interesting, and well worthy of being placed upon record."

For several years after the acquisition of Assam, there were reports that the tea plant was to be found in that province. The consequence was that Lord WILLIAM BENTINCK, in 1834, appointed a committee, of which Sir CHARLES TREVELYAN and Mr. MANGLES are believed to be the sole survivors, to investigate the subject; and in the same year they reported that the tea shrub was beyond all doubt indigenous in Upper Assam; and they stated their perfect confidence that the tea plant which had been brought to light would be found capable, under proper management, of being cultivated with complete success for commercial purposes. This authoritative statement was followed up by a commission to China to procure plants, seeds, and skilled cultivators and manufacturers, and by the sending of scientific men to Assam to examine both the tea plant and the climate of the province. The result proved the wisdom of this course, and the "excitement produced by the appearance in London of the first batch of eight chests of Assam tea, in the year 1839, was such, that the whole of it sold at prices varying from 16s. to 34s. per lb. Indeed, only one lot sold as low as 16s., the average of the whole being 24s. 6d. per lb." "The Assam Company" was then formed, and gave the first real start to the present cultivation of tea in India. It had every encouragement; the Government transferred its tea gardens and establishment on very liberal terms; but the management of the company's affairs in India was entrusted to bad hands. A paid-up capital of £200,000 was exhausted, and the London directors were on the point of abandoning the whole scheme. But a change for the better took place in the administration of the concern in India, and "after a long and arduous struggle," the first dividend upon capital invested in 1839 was paid in 1852, and then only at the rate of 2½ per cent. per annum. From this time the company has gradually but steadily progressed, and the dividend paid this year was 12 per cent. Shares of £20 each, which at first sold in Calcutta for less than one rupee, and which in London could not be got rid of as a gift subject to their responsibilities, are now quoted in Calcutta, "where their real value is best understood," at £58 to £59. The crop of 1861 amounted to 933,850lb., and was sold for £86,080, "after deducting the cost of lead, freight, marine and fire insurance, and sale charges." The crop of 1862 was 1,031,717lb., and that of 1863 was estimated at 1,050,241lb. The company's new plantation in Cachar, the whole cost of forming which was defrayed out of the surplus profits of the gardens in Assam, yielded 49,008lb. in 1862, and have since been sold for £60,000. Seed was also sold in 1862 to the value of £14,000, and the proceeds from the same source in 1863 were estimated at nearly £20,000. Of course between 1839, when its shares were unsaleable, to 1852, when it paid only 2½ per cent., the Assam Company had the field to itself: its prospects were not such as to tempt imitators. But when the dividend was 8, 9, and 10 per cent., as it was in 1857, 1858, 1859, respectively, Dr. NASSAU LEES tells us applications for grants of land poured in, and in 1862 there were in Assam 160 plantations, owned by sixty companies and individuals. In July, 1862, the quantity of land appropriated to the cultivation of tea amounted to 71,218 acres, of which 13,222 were already under cultivation, "bearing an estimated crop of 1,788,787lb. of tea." Thus much for Assam.

In the neighbouring province of Cachar, where also the tea plant has been found growing wild, more than 68,149 acres have been leased to tea-planters. "There are (1862) thirty-one working concerns; and although the experiment has a development of only six years, 6,077 acres have been brought under cultivation, the estimated crop of which for the year is 336,800lb. of manufactured tea." The tea of Cachar is pronounced by London brokers to be "quite equal in every respect to the best Assam." At Darjeeling, on the lowest range of the Himalayas, 8,762 acres have been brought under cultivation with seed from Assam; and the crop in 1862 was estimated at 78,244lb. Successful experiments have also been tried at Chittagong, in the extreme south-east of Bengal, and upon a larger scale at Sylhet, a district bordering on Cachar, where the prospects of planting are said to be very good.

Almost simultaneously with the commencement of tea cultivation in Assam, experimental gardens were laid out by the direction of Government on the skirts of the Himalayas, in the North-West Provinces, and planted with some of the seed brought from China by direction of Lord WILLIAM BENTINCK; and some of the growth of this district brought to London in 1842, was pronounced by an eminent broker to be "equal to the superior black tea generally sent as presents, and better for the most part than the China tea imported for mercantile purposes." And we are told that the tea of the North-Western Provinces, raised entirely from Chinese seed, has retained its character to this day "as being finer and more delicate in flavour than the produce of Assam."

We owe Mr. FORTUNE's well-known and valuable books to the fact of his having been sent twice to China by the Court of Directors, to collect seeds and seedlings, which were despatched to the North-West, where the Government have experimental gardens, and retain in their own hands the means of supplying all cultivators alike with seeds and plants. Dr. LEES thus states the result of this very creditable course adhered to by the Government:—"By a late return, I find that there were established at the end of last year, in Kumuon, 18; in the Deyrah Dhoon, 25; in Gurhwal, 3; at Simla, 3; in the Kangra Valley, 26; and at Kooloo, 3; or a grand total of 78 *bonâ fide* tea plantations. Of this number, 37 are in the hands of European companies and individuals, and the remainder are worked by natives. Last year, 89 tons of tea seed, and 2,400,000 seedlings, were distributed gratis to private planters from the Government factories; and yet, though so immense the supply, it fell far short of the demand. Many indents sent in could not be complied with."

But since Dr. LEES, the latest writer on the subject, published his book, the area of tea plantations in Assam has increased from 71,218 acres, with 13,222 under cultivation, to 123,000 acres, with 20,000 under cultivation; and the clearing last year amounted to 6,000 acres.

Calcutta *Gazettes* team with notices by the Government of waste land to be put up to sale to the highest bidder above the upset price of 2 rupees 8 annas (5s.) per acre; and the number of lots advertised in three of the divisions of Assam amount in the aggregate to 66, with an area of 54,371 acres. There has been a like increase of cultivation and production, both in Cachar and Darjeeling. "But," says our authority, "it is in the North-Western Provinces and in the Punjaub that the rate of progress appears to be most remarkable." Dr. JAMESON, the superintendent of the Botanical Garden of the Government in the North-West, in a report of the 8th of May, 1863, gives some statistics on this matter, described as "marvellous," and says the "move is already a national one, and the part which it was necessary for a great and powerful Government to play is completed." He recommended that the tea-plantations of the Government in Kumuon and the Dehra Dhoon should be sold in fee simple to the highest bidder above the upset price which should be received before the 1st of April last, advertisements to that effect being issued in England as well as in India. This proposal was sanctioned, but the time was postponed to the 1st October next, in order to allow capitalists in England full time to communicate with India, and to receive replies before sending in their tenders. Among many estates raised entirely from seeds and plants supplied by Government gratis and afterwards sold, the Harbunswallah estate in the Dehra Dhoon, changed hands for £50,000.

It is not to England only that the tea of India is destined to compete with that of China. Dr. JAMESON tells us that it is already being taken to Bokhara, and the manufacture of "brick tea" for sale in Tartary has been commenced. But all that "has been done and is doing, is only a feeble fore-shadowing of an enormous cultivation and trade." Tea plants are now thriving over 4°0 degrees of latitude, and 80 degrees of longitude—a tract containing more than 35,000 square miles. And Dr. JAMESON tells us that were all this area planted, and yielding only 100lb. an acre, the produce would amount to 930,000,000lb., while, "with high cultivation, the figures might easily be doubled."

BORDER CUSTOMS QUESTION.

(FROM THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, SEPT. 28.)

It has happened for our special instruction that just at the time when New South Wales has been forced into the collection of its own duties on the Murray by the refusal of Victoria to offer any friendly assistance in the matter, Victoria has been forced into the same obligation by the refusal of South Australia to accommodate it. And it is very remarkable to notice the different behaviour of Victoria according as it suffers or inflicts the injury. So long as only New South Wales suffered, Victoria was shocked at the idea of border duties. The moment it began to suffer itself, it established a rigorous preventive service.

Placed between New South Wales and South Australia, Victoria is something in the position of the Irishman who had to take part in a triangular duel, and who received a shot from either side, while he had only one shot to return. Victoria finds itself quarrelling with both its neighbours at the same time, and as the quarrel is on opposite grounds it has to face about in a rather singular manner.

New South Wales is also between two colonies, and has the border question to adjust with both of them. Queensland complained of dutiable goods entering by its southern frontier. But the cause of complaint was speedily removed by a friendly agreement. Our Government then sought to make an agreement in the same spirit with Victoria, but it was refused.

Victoria, on the other hand, wishes to receive from South Australia the accommodation it refuses to grant to New South Wales. And the contrast between what it gives and what it expects, between its own style of defence and its criticism on the self-defence of New South Wales, is instructive. It is fortunate that the two quarrels happen contemporaneously, because it shows the way in which Victoria understands the golden rule.

When New South Wales, sorely pinched for income, begins to collect for itself its border revenue, Victoria holds up its Briarean hands, and *The Argus* opens its hundred eyes in blank astonishment at the barbarous retrogressiveness of New South Wales, in reverting to the exploded system of collecting inland customs. But when Victoria herself is advised of the fact that she is losing the duty on a few boxes of opium, she stops the transit of the goods at once, and publishes a severe edict warning all who may attempt to repeat the process that goods so landed from the Murray will be forfeited, and the owner will be liable to a penalty of three times their value, and that the Customs laws will be strictly enforced. The speed, too, with which Victoria springs to the assertion of its rights is in noticeable contrast with the drawling negotiations it has carried on with New South Wales. Our revenue has suffered for years to the great enrichment of the Treasury at Melbourne, yet it was only when the resources of negotiation were exhausted that action began. It is estimated that our revenue has lost more than a hundred thousand pounds' worth of border duties. Yet Victoria has lost at most only a few pounds; but that loss has stung it into instant action. We do not blame Mr. M'Culloch at all for looking after his own duties, but what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. If it is not barbarous and retrogressive in him to look after a few pounds worth of duty on opium, it cannot be so very atrocious in us to see after the collection of £20,000 a year.

The Border quarrel would have developed itself when the Murray was first opened up years ago, as a joint complaint on the part of New South Wales and Victoria against South Australia, if it had not been that the last-named colony had volunteered to protect our revenue interests by collecting the duties for us on river-borne goods, and handing us over the receipts, less ten per cent. for the cost of collection. This plan of mutual accommodation—one colony collecting duties for another—or rather for two others—has been in existence for years, and has worked well. There was nothing to have prevented its extension to the case of our border duties, but the refusal of Victoria to give to one neighbour the same sort of accommodation that it received from another. Riverina has drawn its supplies through the ports of two of our neighbours. From one we have received the duties collected; from the other we have received nothing. Yet ten times the quantity of Riverine supplies have paid duty in Melbourne that have paid duty at the Goolwa. We have saved at the spigot and lost at the bung-hole.

The arrangement with South Australia that has worked so satisfactorily would have been continued indefinitely, but for the refusal of Victoria to indemnify South Australia for a loss of revenue it suffers on its south-eastern border. It appears that that part of South Australia which lies nearest to the Victorian harbour of Portland Bay draws its supplies thence, in preference to getting them from a South Australian port, and that the loss of revenue thence accruing, though not very large, has been submitted to for several years. The Government of South Australia at length pressed for some allowance on this score; but, of course, Victoria could not think of any such thing. Whereupon South Australia, thinking that the reciprocity ought not to be all on one side, declined any longer to give to its neighbour the accommodation that was refused in its turn. It has ceased, therefore, to collect duties for Victoria on river-borne goods, and Victoria is placed under the necessity of either disregarding the duties on goods landed on its borders by way of the Murray, or else of watching that border and seizing such goods. It has adopted the latter alternative, and has commenced that very practice of seizing against which it has so bitterly inveighed. As, however, a very small quantity of goods are introduced into Victoria by that route, the expense and trouble of watching the border will probably far exceed the revenue derivable. Victoria would not have brought itself into this position if it had not been so unaccommodating.

Both banks of the river, therefore, are now guarded by Customs officers. On the north bank the officers guard against contraband goods being brought across the river, on the south they guard against contraband being brought up the river. The case provided for by the Constitution Act has arisen. Both colonies have a right to control the navigation of the river, so far forth as the protection of their own revenue is concerned, and to decree the forfeiture of any boat, steamer, or punt engaged in an illicit traffic.

We cannot recur to this subject without again expressing our regret that such a state of things should have arisen, and our condemnation of it as in every respect injurious to the welfare of both colonies. It is understood that Victoria has referred the matter to the decision of the home Government. Then why not till the reply of the Secretary of State is received allow a registry of the dutiable goods that cross the frontier to be taken, so that the money may be handed over subject to any arrangement that may be made? This would get rid of all the hindrance to commerce, and put a stop to all the danger of collision.

(FROM THE DENILIQUIN CHRONICLE, OCT. 1.)

Mr. Forster ought to be perfectly satisfied. By his proceedings in reference to the border customs he has seriously damaged the Ministry of which he is a member, and has made New South Wales thoroughly ridiculous. On the 9th of June, in a letter to Mr. M'Culloch, he declared that the establishment of custom-houses along the border would be "equally injudicious and destructive to the best interests of both colonies." On the 23rd of August, he proclaimed his intention of imposing border customs and of sacrificing the "best interests" of the people of Riverina. On the 19th of September, he issued a customs ukase, coolly depriving Victoria of a most valuable legal right, and actually confiscated her steam-vessels. Within ten days from that, he, in the name of New South Wales, surrenders to six policemen what he had declared to be a national right. There is no mistake, it was not to legality or justice, but to the six policemen, he struck the flag of New South Wales. Had he acknowledged his error, he would have saved the honour of his country, and rendered himself only a subject of laughter; but he has preferred maintaining the justness of the claim, and ignominiously surrendering it to superior force, bringing a blush upon the cheek of every sensitive New South Welshman. But even this was not ignominy enough. The humble official who carried out his instructions is disavowed, and is made to share the disgrace of the Minister.

His wretched diplomacy, however, did not end here. Not content with putting up custom-houses himself, by intriguing with South Australia, he takes steps to force Victoria to do the same. Independent of retaliation on New South Wales, Victoria had no other course open than to place custom-houses on the border to protect itself from South Australia. That colony, by treaty with New South Wales, resolved to refund none of the duties paid on goods passed into Victoria. The consequence is, that after Monday next, the unfortunate settlers on the Riverine banks of the Murray will have to pay duty on the wine sent into Victoria, and their facilities for traffic will be almost destroyed by the impediments which the customs regulations throw in the way of trade. Indeed, it may safely be said, that the river trade must perish if this wretched system is continued. If steamers have to clear out for only five or six ports on the river, and can no longer discharge and take in parcels as they go along, it will never pay them to work, and both Governments will lose more in the sale of land than the proceeds of the customs will amount to. It is a ruinous game to all parties, and will prove a great check to settlement in Riverina.

Another instance of Mr. Forster's perverseness is his yielding ten per cent. to South Australia, and refusing to listen to any proposition from Victoria. The cost of collecting the customs does not exceed three and a half per cent.; but South Australia declines to surrender them unless at a profit of seven and a half per cent. If Victoria, instead of demanding a share of the money, would prefer having the whole expended in a particular manner mutually beneficial to the two colonies, does she not make a much more dignified and respectable stipulation than South Australia? The latter asks for spoil and is declared honest; Victoria asks for a beneficial expenditure, and Mr. Forster kicks up his heels, and says she is dishonest.

The Argus correspondent at Echuca states that New South Wales has absolutely abandoned the claim to exclude Victoria from the free navigation of the Murray. We have more than once intimated our belief that Mr. Forster acted in this matter on his own judgement, and did not take legal advice; and this last announcement goes far to confirm that view. The matter became too serious for Mr. Martin any longer to hold back from interference.

PROPOSAL FOR AN AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS UNION.

(FROM THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, SEPT. 28.)

The conviction is probably gaining ground among thoughtful persons that the best remedy for our border quarrels, because the most permanent, would be the establishment of a Customs union. With respect to the redistribution of the money according to the proportion of population, there would not, probably, be much quarrel. The minor disputes that might arise on that point could be settled without much difficulty. The more serious obstacle in the way is the diversity of opinion about the model tariff that should be adopted in common, and the instability of the popular will, which is always demanding changes in the tariff, and is restless in the absence of meddlesome legislation.

One attempt, however, was made to establish a common tariff, and up to a certain point it was successful. We are bound to remember that it fell through in consequence of the defection of our own Government. The conference that met at Melbourne to discuss the subject of a uniform tariff did not separate without coming to any conclusion. On the contrary, a tariff was agreed to. This agreement, of course, did not bind the separate Legislatures, and it is possible that before all the Legislatures had agreed some further modifications might have been necessary. But still, representatives for the time being of each of the southern colonies succeeded in coming to an agreement, and these representatives were members of Cabinets then in power, and might have been able to prevail upon their separate Parliaments to endorse the conclusions to which the conference had come. There is nothing to prove that a common tariff might not now have been in operation in all these colonies if our Government had not squashed the whole concern.

It will be remembered that the reason why the whole negotiation was thus rendered abortive was, that Mr. Cowper declined to press the model tariff on his Parliament unless Victoria would agree to an adjustment of the Border question; and as Victoria stoutly refused to refund anything, our colony withdrew from the adoption of the tariff. Subsequent events have seemed to indicate that this policy was short-sighted, and that it would have been better to have adhered to the agreement.

The alternative presented to the Victorian Government was one that did not press with any weight upon it. Victoria was under no particular obligation to be very anxious about the common tariff. Its honour was not concerned, for the proposal did not originate at Melbourne. Its finances were not concerned, for it suffered nothing from the variety of tariffs. Mr. Cowper's refusal to co-operate was in no respect distressing to it. Nothing was offered to compensate it for the surrender of our border revenue which was asked from it.

It is even possible that Mr. Cowper might have saved his own Ministry by accepting the common tariff. It would have given him more revenue, and thereby helped him largely out of the financial perplexity which ultimately brought him to grief. And though some of the items in the tariff might have been objected to in Parliament, still the odium of proposing them would have rested not with the Ministry but with the conference; and, for the sake of unity, many votes might have been recorded in favour of the proposed tariff which would not have been given to it as the handiwork of a particular Ministry. The extra revenue would thus have been secured, and a good deal of the unpopularity attaching to the imposition of fresh taxes would have been diverted.

The restoration of *ad valorem* duties, too, in South Australia would have been averted. These duties were condemned by the conference; but, as soon as the parties to the conference were set free by Mr. Cowper's defection, South Australia hastened to re-enact its discarded *ad valorem* duties, and so gave this objectionable form of taxation a renewed Australian vitality.

If Mr. Cowper had succeeded in getting a Parliamentary assent for the common tariff, and had yet been ejected from office on some other part of his financial policy, the colony would have been saved from the protectionist schemes of the present Ministry, and that would have been no slight relief. It has been proved pretty satisfactorily that the country is in favour of free trade, and does not want to be led by the nose by the patrons of dear commodities. But the attempt to force protection under the pressure of a financial exigency has been mischievous every way. It has damaged our reputation before the world, it has deranged the course of commerce, and it has postponed the adoption of the necessary financial reforms. A right financial policy might by this time have brought our exchequer into a sound position; the attempt to force us into a wrong policy—an attempt which, in the permanent interests of the colony, it was necessary to resist and defeat—led to the waste of valuable time, to the indefinite postponement of necessary taxation, and has thereby left us still struggling in the mire. What the next financial exposition will be, we cannot venture to predict, but it cannot be a favourable one; and it must be much more unfavourable than it would have been if the taxes which Parliament would readily have acceded to last session had been for the last nine months replenishing our exhausted Treasury.

Another advantage of a fixed tariff would have been that it would have prevented any deliberate undercutting among the different colonies by tariffs purposely made to be mutually hostile. According to Mr. M'Culloch's announcement, Victoria is to revenge itself on New South Wales, by the adoption of a tariff which will still further embarrass our finances, and which is to be proposed for that special purpose. This is a very undesirable style of intercolonial warfare, and strongly to be deprecated. It may do a great deal of mischief, and lead to a great deal of injurious retaliation, and can do very little good. But it would be prevented altogether if a common tariff were adopted as fixed for a term of years.

RIVERINA AND INDEPENDENCE.

(FROM THE PASTORAL TIMES.)

Now that the link between the Riverine Association and the powers in Sydney has been severed, it will be necessary that we should prepare for a long, arduous, and perhaps costly, political struggle. Our first appeal to England may not be successful—it would be wonderful were it otherwise. The interest which the Sydney Government can bring to bear at home is something considerable, and if we were to sketch it as it appears to us, not magnified we fear, it is possible that many hearts stout and strong in the cause of independence would quail. We must bear in mind that all the great station-holders, even in Riverina, are not linked with us, and it is possible that they would be against us. We have it on good authority that there is a strong opposition, powerful in influence, monetary and social, already in London who have declared their antagonism to the Riverine movement. No one knows this better than Mr. W. A. Brodribb, one of the executive of the mission to London. Again, we shall have the decided, unmistakable, and unflinching hostility of all parties in Sydney political circles. We cannot overlook this fact. The very men who spoke strenuously in favour of the justice of the Riverine appeal when it was partially heard in the Sydney Assembly are certain to be dead against us now. The reason is obvious. When we were supplicating for justice, there then were necessarily many of the members who were favourable to the concessions we asked for. The position is now changed; while they were willing to aid us then, they will now be our active opponents. This would appear to be the barrier most difficult to surmount, and this it is that makes us anxious to impress upon the friends of independence that they should be prepared for a long, obstinate, and perhaps costly, agitation carried on in London."

A FRENCH VIEW OF LIFE ASSURANCE.

(FROM THE TIMES.)

A well-known story of Horace Walpole's tells us how the men at White's betted on whether a man who had fallen down in a fit at the door of the club was dead; and the wagerers on his death refused to allow him to be bled, on the plea that it might bring him back to life again. Walpole does not tell us the issue of the event, but there is too much reason to believe that the unfortunate man perished a victim to the ingenious sophism in support of the purity of wagers.

The conduct of the men at White's is an apt illustration of the danger of allowing bets to be made on the life of a man in whose existence the betters have no other interest than that derived from the betting. But who would argue from it that life insurance as practised among us ought to be forbidden? The wagerers on the man's death had everything to gain by his being dead. A man who effects an insurance on another's life is not allowed to recover a greater sum than he loses by the death of the person insured. Yet it would seem from the reasoning of the Procureur-Général, in the recent case of La Pommerais, at Paris, that he is unable to appreciate this simple distinction. Because La Pommerais made a criminal but futile attempt to defraud an insurance company, he would have the practice of insurance declared illegal. Once permit a man to bargain for a sum of money to be paid upon the death of another, and you open the way for the commission of every crime. Poison or the dagger will be in universal request. The mere refusal to allow the use of the ordinary methods of restoring life in those apparently dead becomes a venial offence, an offence coupled with extenuating circumstances of an irresistible character. The only way to prevent such occurrences is to prohibit the practice of life insurance entirely, and this is the course which a wise legislator would adopt. Such is the reasoning of M. Dupin. The fallacies involved in [illegible] are self-evident; but there is no reason to doubt that the Procureur-Général accurately reflects the French sentiment upon the subject. The contrast between the practice of Frenchmen and Englishmen in matters of fire and life insurance affords a striking example of the [illegible] influence of sentiment and legislation upon the habits of nations.

The observer who confines his attention to a comparison of the prevalence of fire insurance in England and France, would unhesitatingly declare that France was the more provident of the two nations; but if he extended his survey to life insurances, he would find his previous conclusions entirely falsified. The movable and combustible property in England exceeds that of France to a degree almost inconceivable, yet the amount insured by Englishmen against loss by fire falls short of the amount insured by Frenchmen. On the other hand, while insurances on lives are universal in England, in France they are comparatively unknown. The reason of the difference in the practice of fire insurance is easily discoverable. The cost of ordinary insurance against fire is trebled in England by the imposition of a duty. The natural consequence is that owners prefer to be their own insurers, instead of paying the exorbitant rates due to the conjoint demands of the Government and the insurance offices. But in insurance on lives the practice of the two countries is directly reversed. The practice of life insurance in England prevails among all classes. The landowner, enjoying a temporary interest in his estates, insures his life for the purpose of raising portions for his younger children, or of affording additional security to those to whom he may be indebted. The professional man employs the same machinery as a means of providing for his widow and family. The poorest mechanic is practically acquainted with the method of life insurance, and, while we write, a measure is passing through Parliament, the object of which is to provide him with a trustworthy agency for carrying out his desires. Nor is the practice of recent origin. Clubs for the mutual insurance of artisans existed in some of our older cities under the Plantagenets. The modern insurance corporations date from the reigns of Queen Anne and George I. At this moment more than 200 companies exist in the United Kingdom formed for the purpose of carrying on the business of life insurance, and every year, almost every month, adds to their number. In France, on the other hand, life insurance is tolerated rather than legalized; it is doubtful whether the few societies which exist there might not at any time repudiate their engagements on the plea of their illegality, and, if we may accept the report of M. le Procureur-Général Dupin, Frenchmen would view their extinction with satisfaction. Under the old Monarchy, life assurance was absolutely forbidden, and when, on the eve of the Revolution, a plan was proposed for forming a *Compagnie d'Assurance sur la Vie*, Mirabeau vehemently denounced the project. M. Portalis, one of the framers of the *Civil Code*, in 1802, expressed his horror at the vile spirit of trade by which insurances on human life were authorised. Man could never become the subject of a money estimate, nor could his life be made an article of trade. The cupidity which speculated on the existence of the life of a citizen was, in his view, often close to the crime which might cut it short. A practice forbidden by the old law, and nowhere expressly permitted by the new code, has never succeeded in obtaining more than a doubtful and precarious existence. It was not till 1819 that a company for the insurance of lives was permanently established in France; and so little was the scheme acceptable to Frenchmen, that ten years ago there were no more than five life insurance companies existing in the Empire. It was calculated at that time that the whole amount of the sums payable on the death of persons insured by French companies did not amount to one million sterling—a ridiculously insignificant sum when we consider that the accumulated fund of a single English company exceeds five millions. The crime of La Pommerais threatens to revive and intensify the old mistrust of insurances on lives, and it is possible that a solemn declaration of a jurist like M. Dupin may procure an authoritative decision on the illegality of the practice.

It seems strange that a people with the remarkable powers of analysis possessed by the French nation should fail to see the simple conditions which make the insurance of lives a matter free from suspicion, and that an educated lawyer like M. Dupin should give way to an indiscriminate condemnation which we should only expect from the lips of the ignorant. M. de la Pommerais effected insurances on the life of the widow Pauw to the extent of £26,000, and a natural horror is excited at the audacity of a scheme for obtaining such a sum by the murder of his mistress; but similar schemes have been attempted in England, and carried to the same length, without bringing the practice of life insurance into disrepute. The culpable negligence of insurance companies permitted Palmer to effect insurances on lives in which he had no interest; but every one would have been astonished had Sir Alexander Cockburn, as Attorney-General, recommended the Government to introduce a bill into Parliament to prevent insurances from being effected. The law which prevents an insurer recovering from an office the sum insured on a life in which he has no interest, and in any case prevents the recovery of an amount exceeding the value of the interest he has in the life, is in general a sufficient guarantee against the abuse of insurance. It provides that no man shall have a greater interest in killing a man than in keeping him alive; and this is all the law can secure. The law removes the inducement to crime, while it preserves the enormous advantages attendant on life insurance. If M. Dupin wishes to tender the best advice to the Legislature of his country, we would recommend to his consideration the simple expedient against wagering insurances which has been consecrated by nearly a hundred years' use in England.

GENERAL NEWS.

THE KING OF PRUSSIA.—The *Augsburg Gazette* brings us tidings of a recent bravado indulged in by His Majesty of Prussia. "I would rather consent to let my right hand be chopped off than allow the Isle of Alsen, so gloriously conquered by my troops, to fall back again under Danish domination."

A DIPLOMATIC TAILOR.—Mr. Poole, the London tailor, has created a sensation in Berlin by his arrival in that city, and the splendour with which he travelled—having a secretary private courier, and master of the chamber. He was bound on a mission to the Crown Prince, it appears, and was obliged to follow him to Konigsberg.—*Court Journal*.

LEPROSY IN ENGLAND.—There is at present under Dr. Hillier's care in the London University College Hospital, a male patient, who affords a striking illustration of true leprosy formerly so common, but now so rare in this country, and at present almost unknown throughout Europe, except in some districts of Norway and the Peninsula. Dr. Webster has seen the case, and announces it to be a true specimen of the disease.

MASTERS IN THE ROYAL NAVY.—A rumour is again rife that the Lords of the Admiralty have in contemplation a plan by which the grade of master in the Royal Navy is to be abolished. It is stated that, in the first instance, a liberal retirement will be offered to those officers who have attained a certain age, or who can show a lengthened period of employment. The road being thus cleared, it will be then a less difficult matter to absorb or deal with those who remain on the list.—*Army and Navy Gazette*.

MR. COBDEN AND THE MARQUIS OF HARTINGTON.—Mr. Cobden, in the course of a recent speech in the House of Commons, spoke as follows of the military accounts:—"Now, I say that, for a country calling itself a commercial nation, to have such accounts published, and signed 'Hartington,' is monstrous—('hear, hear,' and laughter)—and it only shows the utter valuelessness of anything that the noble Marquis may say at the table on this subject. The noble Marquis has shown that he possesses ability, and he would not do this himself; but it is clear that he recites anything that is put into his hands, and, therefore, what he may say at the table is not worth the slightest attention."

AN AFFECTING IMPORTATION.—The *Realm* describes a singular scene. Some cotton has lately been imported into Faringdon, where the mills had been closed for a considerable time. The people, who were previously in the deepest distress, went out to meet the cotton, the women wept over the bales and kissed them, and finally sang the doxology over the welcome importation. Imagine cotton becoming poetical, and people spontaneously raising a *Te Deum* because asked once more to toil? If that incident is true as it stands, it would make a better incident for the painter than half the worn-out incidents of dramatic story.

GENERAL GRANT IN BATTLE.—A correspondent of the *New York Times* writes:—"I was near General Grant during that terrible Friday (June 3) in the Wilderness. To all outward appearance he was cool, calm, and unoccupied. The skin is so drawn over his forehead that wrinkles there don't show when he is perplexed, and his beard so hides his mouth that no nervousness there betrays his thought. So he sat and whittled, cutting away at his stick with leisurely, measured, meditative strokes much of the time, but turning his knife and cutting at the end nearest himself with short, clipping strokes whenever word came of important changes in the chances of the battle. Thus he fought the great contest with knife and stick, and," adds the writer, giving the reins to his fancy "when the stick was gone the enemy was beaten."

A TOTAL ABSTINENCE FROM FOREIGN ARTICLES OF APPAREL SOCIETY.—On the 2nd of May a ladies' association was formed in Washington, to promote total abstinence "from foreign articles of apparel." The object is to reduce the imports into the United States, and so turn the balance of trade in favour of the country as to prevent the export of gold, or promote its import, and so diminish the difficulties of the Treasury. At first the resolution stood "For three years, or the war, we pledge ourselves to purchase no foreign articles of apparel after 4th July next, when American articles can possibly be substituted," Mrs. Nichol, of Kansas, and Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton spoke against the last seven words as fatal to the principle of the resolution, and they were struck out. If the ladies mean really to economize in expenditure, and so reserve more wealth, either for productive purposes, or for taxation, the movement is doubtless patriotic; but then, it would have been wise to say what they meant. If the object simply is, as it appears to be, to promote the purchase of less durable American apparel, or ornaments of worse workmanship, at greater cost, simply in order to turn the balance of trade in their favour, nothing can be sillier, as its only tendency will be, even if successful, to divert American labour from the production of exports, in which it has a natural advantage, to the production of other articles in which it has none. On the whole, therefore, the country will pay far more for its home-made apparel and ornaments than if it bought them from the foreigner with exports in the production of which it has a natural advantage.

THE BISHOP OF NIGER is a black, the Rev. Samuel Crowther,—the first pure negro ever elevated to the Episcopal see, though very far from the first true African; witness the great St. Augustine. His life has been a stirring one. He was born fifty years ago in the Yoruba country, 100 miles from the Bight of Benin, when his name was Adjai. In 1821 he was carried off by a Mahommedan tribe, exchanged for a horse, again exchanged and cruelly treated, and finally sold as a slave for some tobacco. He was captured by an English man-of-war in 1822, and landed at Sierra Leone. He was baptized in 1825, when he unfortunately changed the characteristic name Adjai to that of Samuel Crowther. He accompanied the first Niger expedition, came to England, was educated at the Church Missionary College, Islington, and ordained by the Bishop of London. He went on the second Niger expedition in 1854, and wrote, it is said, a very able account of it. He has translated the Bible into Yoruba; has been active in missionary work at Akessa, and is, says the *Globe*, from which we borrow this account, a strong though temperate Evangelical. No doubt the African Church has always inclined towards a predestinarian, if not an antinomian, view of Christianity. Mrs. Crowther is also a negro, who apparently retains her native name of Asano. Why native Africans should ever take imitative English names when they become Christians is not easy to see. If the African genius is not to be Christianized, we shall get nothing but a parasitic Anglo-Saxon Christianity out of them.