

the American Civil War were transpiring: raids and counter-raids were the order of the day. Confederation came to consolidate and strengthen the country; and soon after the aid of Sir Francis was sought to consolidate and strengthen its finances. His re-accession to power and influence was the signal for a howl of fury from his old political antagonists. All the weight of the *Globe* fell on his devoted head. But it did not seem to hurt him; and he quietly pursued a task which was congenial to his tastes and powers.

The record of Sir Francis while Minister of Finance under Sir John A. Macdonald is one which is creditable alike to his intellect and morality. He had to face many difficulties. The currency of the country was in a disturbed and abnormal condition. So little had been the metallic circulation in Canada that the moneys of the United States had freely passed in all transactions. But when the silver and copper money of the States was driven here over the border by the greater cheapness there of the legal-tender 'greenbacks,' the harder money accumulated in Canada till it became a 'silver nuisance.' This nuisance was intensified by the fact that the silver was below its nominal par in gold; for which our own paper money was exchangeable. Speculators quietly replaced the full-value Canadian paper by the less value American silver, and it is not too much to say that the course of trade was dis-arranged. The banks tried in vain to arrest the evil by the system of special deposits; and it was only effectually removed by the wise action of the Finance Minister in demonetizing the depreciated foreign silver and replacing it by a temporary issue of national paper of fractional value, which was called in when the danger had passed. Other action of Sir Francis Hincks to regulate the position of the banks and to issue certain Dominion notes, has stood the tests of time and criticism, and is now generally approved.

Private business speculation has always been a favourite pursuit with Sir Francis. The busy active brain finds its pleasure in the mere conduct of these operations; apart from the question of pecuniary results. With these operations the public has no concern, except as any of them may come under notice in the courts of law or in the public newspapers. One of these latter has been the occasion of much comment; but as the affairs of the *Graphic* Company are in a sense *sub judice*, that comment will not be repeated here. Very 'graphic' accounts of the stormy meetings of directors and shareholders were given at the time, which have already been hinted at. Time will doubtless demonstrate the good faith and good management of Sir Francis in these transactions.

Later still, our knight has been before the public as an earnest deprecator of Orangeism, and of the religious animosities which are supposed to be kept alive by that shadowy organization. While it may be a question as to the wisdom and policy of the zealous defence of Romanism to which Sir Francis Hincks has committed himself, there can be none as to the courage with which he has encountered the odium of many of his own creed; and there should be none in regard to the honesty of his convictions, or the sincerity and patriotism of his motives. It may be that too much has been already conceded to Rome: it may be that it is wisest to maintain peace and social harmony and leave ecclesiastical errors to be ground to powder "exceeding small," by the inexorable grinding of the "mills of God," slowly though they work their grist. But again and again, for these and similar offences, has our good knight stood in the pillory and faced the mud-throwing of bitter and infuriated opponents. Not often has he had credit for sincerity of motive: not always fresh have been the eggs with which he has been bespattered. But he is used to these things: and quietly wipes off the soil, which after all leaves no stain, and so holds on his way: except where he sees a chance to give as good as was sent. Then he can throw right out from the shoulder; and with right good will. It is not probable that he will be again active in political life, but in a green and hale old age the country may long have the advantage of his ready counsel and of his long and varied experience.

GRAPHITE.

WEST INDIAN TRADE.

During the stay of a fortnight, about four years ago, at Bridgetown in Barbados, about twenty vessels, ranging from 125 to 250 tons each, arrived there, either from Boston or Baltimore. They were all laden pretty much alike. About one-third of every cargo consisted of ice, and on this were laid quantities of beef, carcasses of mutton, boxes of cheese and eggs, tinnets of butter, barrels of flour, with more or less "sundries," which consisted chiefly of apples, preserved milk, salt fish, &c. On deck of the larger vessels, a few horses and other live stock were carried, and the cargoes were usually sold at auction within forty-eight hours after their arrival.

It may not be generally known that in the West Indies, as in all tropical and semi-tropical countries, there is no grass. They are therefore entirely dependent upon other places for the articles we have enumerated. The number of vessels which arrived during our stay were not, we were told, beyond the usual average for the rest of the year. In the other islands, notably in Jamaica, St. Thomas, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Trinidad, similar cargoes, and of a similar proportion in number to the respective population, were, and are still, we understand, annually received.

It was often asked why Canada did not compete for a portion of the trade. In the article of ice it was believed these Provinces usually produced an abundant crop. Our cheese and butter are believed to be not inferior to that produced by Brother Jonathan; and our fish were pronounced superior to his, and were brought there, more or less, in every cargo. They added that boots and shoes were reputed to be cheaper here than in the States, from which their supply chiefly came, and that in window blinds and sashes, doors, furniture, sewing machines, and in beef and mutton, we could more than compete with the United States at any West Indian port. Our flour, we were told, did not suit them. Our cereals, it was said, had a tendency to become speedily sour during their hot season. Their "staff of life" had therefore to be grown in a latitude south of Pennsylvania.

Intensely loyal to Great Britain—"plus Arab qu' un Arab"—they would prefer commercial intercourse with another British colony rather than with the States, all other things of course being equal. They asked why the Canadian

Government did not aid in promoting this trade, by subsidizing a line of steamers between them and us, and by a re-adjustment of our tariff on sugar, molasses, and other West Indian products?

To these enquiries, it was replied that the conduct of the then Government furnished, perhaps, another illustration of the truth of Chancellor Oxenstern's dictum, that the world was often governed by little wisdom. Why or wherefore the late Government made no effort to cultivate the trade we were unable to say. But if it be true, as it is so reported, that the present Government are about to make an effort to this end, they deserve encouragement from the public, irrespective of race or party. And the first step to the success of this effort must be speedy and regular mail communication, by the establishment of a line of steamers, sailing from Montreal in summer, and from Halifax in winter, and calling at least at Jamaica, St. Thomas, Barbados, St. Lucia, Trinidad, and Demerara. The second step must be in a re-adjustment of our Tariff, to the end of promoting return cargoes, without which no intercolonial trade could be profitable. With these desiderata, it may be reasonably believed the merchants of the Dominion and of the Antilles would quickly establish a large and mutually profitable interchange of trade. The articles we chiefly cultivate and manufacture are those the West Indies are unable either to grow or make, and they have hitherto supplied the lack from places where they are actually dearer than here, and we have, notwithstanding these advantages, been unable to reap them from the want of quick and regular communication, and by a tariff which practically excluded return freight. Our government should be therefore warmly supported in any effort to remove these impediments, and no paltry feeling of party prejudice should withhold approval.

There are other considerations of importance though they may be regarded as of less importance than that of trade. A closer and larger commercial intercourse, between the sixty islands composing the West Indies and ourselves, would be of no mean assistance towards creating that bond of federative union which may become a necessity to our integrity at no remote period. And in this age of travel for "fresh fields and pastures new," the Creole would, with better facilities than now exist for reaching us, frequently avail himself of the opportunity, either to enjoy what to him would be the greatest of natural novelties,—namely, our frozen rivers, and our mountains of snow, or to enjoy the curative properties of our winter climate. While we, on the other hand, would find on their beautiful sea-girt isles relief from pulmonary ailments, and everywhere objects to gratify, in a very high degree, a love for the beautiful in nature. "In the wide world over," there are few places more lovely, and yet comparatively less visited by the tourist, than the British West Indies. They have attractions as marked and distinct of their kind as the Italian lakes and Alpine mountains. During our winter the climate in the Antilles is rarely warmer than here in June or September, except in the valleys. During these so-called winter months is their harvest season. There is no rain then; the sugar-cane becomes ripe, and is made into sugar; the other fruits are in their prime, the greater part of their flora is in bloom, and their gorgeous and infinite variety of palms appear most luxuriant. Viewed from the calm and pellucid Caribbean Sea, these beautiful islands appear like

"Larger constellations burning, mellow moons, and happy skies—
Breaths of tropic shade, palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Droops of heavy perfum'd flower, hangs the heavy fruited tree,
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark purple spheres of sea."

The hotels, it must be confessed, are somewhat deficient in comfort, and we know no better fields for an enterprising Southgate or Worthington than at St. Thomas, or at Port of Spain in Trinidad, or at Hastings in Barbados. But this lack is largely supplied by the unbounded hospitality of the Creole.* A letter of introduction is enough to procure for the bearer a hearty welcome to their tables, and a bed.

JOHN POPHAM.

MILK AS FOOD IN SICKNESS AND HEALTH.—Dr. Crosby, of the Bellevue Hospital, pronounces milk an article of diet which all persons may use, under nearly all conditions. There are those who say that they cannot take milk, that it makes them bilious, &c., but he declares that this is not true. A person who is sick may take milk with the greatest possible advantage, because it contains, in a form easy of assimilation, all the elements essential for maintaining nutrition. It is the natural aliment of the young animal, and certainly answers a good purpose for the old animal, provided it is used properly, and not poured into a stomach already overfilled, as though it had in itself no substance or richness. New milk, he does not hesitate to say, may be taken, as far as disease is concerned, in nearly every condition. Perhaps it will require the addition of a spoonful or two of lime water. The addition of a little salt will often prevent the after feeling of fullness and "wind on the stomach," which some complain of. If marked acidity of the stomach is present, then perhaps a little gentian may be requisite to stimulate the stomach somewhat, and it may be necessary to give it in small quantities and repeat it often: but ice-cold milk can be put into a very irritable stomach, if given in small quantities and at short intervals, with the happiest effect. It is used in case of fever, which formerly it was thought to "feed," and when scalded it has a desirable effect in summer complaints. But it is as an article of diet for people in health, and who wish to remain in that happy condition, that milk should be most appreciated. For the mid-day lunch of those whose hearty meal comes at night, or for the supper of those who dine at noon, nothing is so good. The great variety and excellent quality of prepared cereals give a wide choice of food to use with milk. Bread, with berries in their season, or baked sweet apples, boiled rice, cracked wheat, oatmeal, hulled corn or hominy, taken with a generous bowl of pure cold milk, makes the best possible light meal in warm weather for children, and for all adults who have not some positive physical idiosyncrasy that prevents them from digesting it. The men of the firmest health and longest life are the men of regular and simple habits, and milk is a standard in such a diet.

* I use the word "Creole" in the West Indian sense. It there means a native white, without any admixture of negro blood.
J. P.