

them issuing lower denominations) * consequently the people were as ill off for small change as they had been for large change. Many coiners, with considerable profit to themselves, by a copper currency, attempted to help their fellow citizens out of the dilemma. Ample and exceedingly varied was this currency, and our Canadian Numismatic study lingers around it with fond remembrance ; otherwise it would have been barren indeed. This metallic currency was at length voted an intolerable nuisance, for generally two or three dollars and even more would be received in this assorted change. Carrying change to the market was often as laborious as bringing home the marketing. It was a return to the old Roman method of purchasing by the pound weight of copper or bronze. All coppers, not the issue of the government, or, perhaps better of other governments, were called in, rather their circulation called down and great quantities collected, and thrown into the St. Lawrence. There was again a great dearth of small change. To remedy this, several wealthy firms, and some not so wealthy, issued series of fractional notes of denominations varying from three pence (five cents) to two-and-sixpence (fifty cents). These fractional notes were at that time looked upon as a great convenience and were eagerly accepted as sovereign relief from the pressing evil.

The earliest issues of these were unsightly things. Mere labels, well named shinplasters, printed from coarse wood-blocks, or even from type. The paper too was poor, so that there was nothing to prevent a wholesale manufactory. They often bore allusion to the return of specie payment when they were to be redeemed in coin ; but that return, to the loss of the holders, never came to many of them.

This was not the case with those issued by Cuvillier & Sons, a firm of undoubted integrity and ability. Their

* A large number were issued, ostensibly by Felix Souliguy, for the Banque du Peuple.