

and where our principles are fully stated. The following passage, page 26, embodies in a few words our opinions, and will serve as an answer to our assailant :

"To govern a Colony, indeed, the great aim should be to govern so that the state of dependence may not be felt, and this can never be the case whilst the commercial relations of the two are dependent on an artificial system of protection, requiring constant adjustment, and leaving both parties room to complain that their interests are not sufficiently consulted. But let the connexion look for its maintenance to the conviction that whilst their commercial interests are not interfered with, their political importance is immensely increased, and what shall disturb it? Tariffs may be changed and trade seek other channels, but so long as the right of buying in the cheapest market, and selling in the dearest, is conceded to the Colonist, we need fear but little for British connexion. It will remain linked with our interest as well as our pride, and be the means of encouraging our strength as it has hitherto supported our weakness."

The Editor of the *Gazette* makes, in his paper of the 21st instant, the following reference to the *Economist* :

"It is quoted with approbation from the *Minerve* in this very number of the *Economist*, that it is a 'just and moderate demand' that the colony 'should regulate its tariff without being subject to the delays and inconveniences of the royal sanction!' You are getting on pretty fast, gentlemen."

What reliance, we ask, can his readers place on the correctness of his statements when they are informed that there is not in the *Economist* any such quotation from the *Minerve*, nor the slightest allusion to its being "a just and moderate demand" that the colony should regulate its tariff without being subject to the delays and inconveniences of the royal sanction." We request our readers to refer back to our last number, where they will find a letter translated from the French, which had already appeared in the *Herald*, introduced by a few remarks expressive of our satisfaction at the interest which the writer takes in the subject of Free Trade, and of our desire that he will use his influence with his countrymen "to induce them to enter with like zeal into these questions."

But we have not yet done with the Editor of the *Montreal Gazette*. Not content with impugning our conduct, how groundlessly we have sufficiently proved, he has passed an animated eulogium on his own, in these terms (see *Gazette* of 19th instant):

"The pretence that the canal debt was contracted under any idea of differential corn duties sending American provisions this way, and that the obligation is contingent on the maintenance of the defunct British Corn Laws, is one of the most foolish and fraudulent ever devised. It is doing incalculable injury to the credit of the Province, both public and private. When the cry was got up by the Conservative and Radical papers united, repeated so widely and so loudly, that the *Minerve*, we think it was, but we are not sure—it was one of the French papers—said that it was the universal sentiment of the press, and, indeed, it so seemed, we, first of all, dared to raise our voice against it."

We have no wish to imitate the Editor of the *Gazette* and to set up our own *ipse dixit* as an incontrovertible fact, but as we cannot charge our memory with the particular epoch when he raised his voice against the repudiation of the public debt on the grounds stated in the above extract, we must hesitate before we acquiesce in his estimation of his own merits.

Of one point, however, we have a distinct recollection. When a certain despatch of the Governor General to the Colonial Secretary dated 28th January last made its appearance, in which that detestable doctrine, on which the *Gazette* now so justly animadverts, was propounded, and when (under correction, if our memory be treacherous) the Government organ in matters not commercial was silent, we, to use the words of the *Gazette*, "first of all, dared to raise our voice against it," as the following extract will shew, (see *Economist* No. 10.) which, although long, we insert, as it may serve to strip the daw of its borrowed plumage :

"But the advisers of this despatch, not content with making us throw off our allegiance to the mother country, seem desirous that we should cast off at the same time all other moral obligations. They hint, as a 'possible case,' national bankruptcy—in other words, the violation of the solemn compact entered into with the public creditors—of throwing upon our guarantee the burthen of paying the debts we have incurred—and all the other villainies comprehended under the term REPUDIATION."

"Now, on what grounds is so detestable a proposition predicated, or how is it, we will not say justified, but palliated? The despatch says :

"The improvement of the internal communications by water in Canada was undertaken on the strength of the advantage of exporting to England our surplus wheat and flour by Quebec. Should no such advantage exist, the revenue of the province to be derived from the tolls would fail. The means of the province to pay principal and interest on the debt guaranteed by England, would be diminished, and the general prosperity of the province would be so materially affected as to reduce its revenue derived from its commerce, thus rendering it a possible case that the guarantee given to the public creditors would have to be resorted to by them for the satisfaction of their claims."

"Any person reading the above passage, and the other parts of the despatch, would infer that the vast expenditure on our internal communications by water had been incurred under the guarantee of Great Britain that we were to enjoy some specific degree of protection in her market for our surplus wheat and flour, and that, without promise of protection, these works would not have been undertaken. Now, if our readers will take the trouble to peruse the Journals of the House of Assembly for the session of 1841, they will be satisfied that there was no promise or pledge,

either expressed or implied, on the part of the British Government; but that the guarantee of the debt to be incurred was given simply as a boon, and principally with a view to the rendering efficient of works begun long before, but sinking into decay, and otherwise useless from their not being completed to the shipping parts, and that, throughout the whole of the proceedings of the House of Assembly on the subject of public improvements, not the slightest reference is made to the corn trade of the country. So little did our legislators at that time think of what the despatch styles 'our surplus wheat and flour,' that, in the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Assembly on the wheat and flour trade, in 1842, it is observed,—'All the grain grown in Canada will not supply the consumption of British North America.' Indeed, from the year 1832 to the year 1839, Canada had not exported to Great Britain any quantity of either wheat or flour worthy of notice.

"It must, therefore, be obvious to every person, that the assertion in the despatch, that 'the improvements in the internal communications by water in Canada, were undertaken on the strength of the advantage of exporting to England our surplus wheat and flour by Quebec,' is, like many other parts of the document, utterly erroneous. And we shall only add to this exposition, that the Corn Law, the repeal of which is thus protested against, was not passed till 1843; and the public debt, the repudiation of which is almost justified on account of the repeal, was incurred in 1841!"

As the Editor of the *Montreal Gazette* would not condescend to answer our arguments of last week, we scarcely expect him to resolve our doubts of this, as to the time when, "amongst the faithless, faithful only he" first raised his voice on the question of the repudiation of the public debt.

THE QUEBEC BOARD OF TRADE.

Our readers will recollect a certain Anti-Free-Trade Petition adopted by the Quebec Board of Trade, at a meeting held in the Spring of the present year. That meeting and petition attracted considerable attention at the time, and the speeches, and opinions, and petition, were quoted by a portion of the press and community as an off-set to the proceedings and petition of the Free-Trade Meeting of Montreal, against which it was more than suspected they were directed. Strange to say, however, although the petition adopted by the Quebec Board of Trade, was duly forwarded to the Home Government, and an answer known to have been duly received in return, that answer was never made known to the public. As might be suspected, a few intrusive and curious people did enquire the reason of this, and wonder how it could be:—but no matter, the Quebec Board of Trade knew their own business best, and the answer to the petition remained "in the deep bosom of protection buried." Within the last week, however, the long-missing answer has been resuscitated, and, by the kindness of a friend in the sister city, a copy has come to our hands. It is true that the subject is now neither new nor rare—that it has an odour of antiquity about it equal almost to that which attaches to the venerable body from which it emanates, but still that is no reason why it should be denied the common rights of all petitions, and more particularly since its publication may serve to explain the mystery of its non-appearance before:—

CIVIL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
Montreal, 8th June, 1846.

Sir,—I am directed by the Governor-General to acquaint you, for the information of the merchants and others, citizens of Quebec, who signed the Petition to her Majesty, praying her not to sanction the contemplated modifications in the Tariff on wood goods,

That the Secretary of State for the Colonies laid this Petition before her Majesty, who was pleased to receive it very graciously, but it was not in Mr. Gladstone's power to advise her Majesty to assent to its prayer for the following reasons:—

Her Majesty had invited Parliament to adopt the proposal to which the Petition refers.

The House of Commons was then about to enter on the consideration of the Customs' Duties Bill, in which this proposal is included at the advanced stage where the bill is reported to the House from the Committee of the whole House, immediately before the engrossment and third reading. At such a stage, it would be most unusual for the House of Commons to reverse the decision which it has given on the occasions afforded by the various earlier stages of the bill, and by the preliminary Committee which is required with respect to all questions of Trade, and in which they ordinarily undergo the most searching examination.

Thus, Her Majesty having recommended to Parliament a particular course, has had no reason, in the reception which Parliament has given to the recommendation, to adopt any alteration of it.

But Mr. Gladstone does not wish to be understood as implying that this is the principal difficulty which obstructs a compliance with the prayer of the petitioners. There are others, including some of a higher order.

First, Her Majesty's Government do not doubt the very high respectability of the petitioners, and would be disposed on general grounds to attach great weight to their opinions. But her Majesty's Government have found themselves obliged, on a great variety of occasions, to adopt and to adhere to proposals unacceptable to many of the parties immediately affected by them, notwithstanding their belief in the high integrity of those parties, and their perfect freedom from any consciousness of an interest that would warp the judgment; and her Majesty's Government cannot but observe that they do not find any reason to suppose,