THE DAILY BEE.
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NEW ORLEANS:
TUESDAY MORNING, JUNE 17, 1862.

THE FOOD QUESTION.

The high price of provisions, if not their scarcity, is still the burthen of complaint in this city. Some attribute this state of things to the derangement of the currency. This derangement, if in the beginning it could have affected the price of provisions, by giving them a value relative to the character of the currency cannot now be said to exist, since under the new order of things the currency has been gradually consolidated.

It is not so much the nature of the currency which affects the price of provisions, perhaps, as it is the utter absence of a healthy trade. The scarcity, moreover, of some of the principal articles of food, leave to holders a field for speculation which hardens upon monopoly. When with the scarcity of provisions on one hand, and the utter absence of labor on the other, by which the people might earn the means of purchasing the articles of first necessity, we have a clear explanation of the real cause of the high prices which rule the market.

And moreover, assuming a brisk trade of importation from the Northern ports to our own, the rates would still rule high, even when the market would be clogged by inconsiderable imports. The difficulties and circumstances obeying the exactions of the law of supply and demand, where the supply exceeds the demand, is becomes obvious that the prices of provisions would necessarily fall, and this would be the only relief for the great of the market. It is true that some would be benefited in such an event, but the large majority would not the less suffer; for, of what benefit would it be to them that flour should sell at $5 instead of $9.50 per barrel, when they cannot command the means of purchasing it at any price.

The attention should be turned to finding honest and remunerative employments for the people, and then trade would rapidly incline towards its just equilibrium. And it is not alone the people classes who are in distress from the want of employment, but that most important and active class, the mercantile community itself, is in a perfect state of stagnation, from the absence of the ordinary articles which feed commerce.

This city, from its natural position, has unparalleled facilities for drawing supplies from every portion of the Mississippi Valley; and upon what must the Mississippi open from the Ohio to its mouth, how the large influx of provisions which would necessarily follow, would relieve the pressing wants of the city, so long as the means of securing the relief would be wanting, it is difficult to determine. It has been urged that the chief trouble which the holder would meet was the currency in circulation in this city, which possessed no value of any kind in the North, but the plea cannot obtain at present, where there is a gradual consolidation of the currency.

It would therefore seem more in conformity with truth to say that the nature of the currency does not so much affect the rates of supplies as the entire stagnation of business which deprives the merchant, the mechanic and the laborer, with the means of securing the necessaries of life.

We cannot expect to see the present high rates of supplies reduced, until trade itself will have received that invigorating impulse which the unhampered working of the law of supply and demand alone can give.

RUM AND ALCOHOL.—Mr. T. LABARE, of No. 13 Conti street, advertises this morning both of these articles for sale. See advertisement.

Interesting Correspondence.

The *Evening Delta* of yesterday publishes the following correspondence between the British, French and Greek Consuls, and General Butler:

NEW ORLEANS, June 11, 1862.

Sir—It has been represented to the undersigned by Mr. Covas, of the commercial firm of Covas & Negroponte, carrying on business in this city, that certain sugars bought by his firm, consigned by with Messrs. Ralli, Benachi & Co., also carrying on business here, are not allowed to be sold or taken from the place in which such sugars are stored, without further orders from you.

We beg here to state that Mr. Covas represents to the undersigned that the sugars in question, numbered and marked with private marks are the property of British, French and Greek subjects and with which fact you are already acquainted.

A new purchaser of these sugars were effected at various times, ranging from January to March last, paid for at the time of purchase, in the usual manner in which such business is carried on here by commercial houses, and for purchasing for account of distant parties, i. e., by the proceeds of billsof exchange, drawn on and accepted by houses here upon the bona fide owner of the produce.

These transactions were strictly mercantile, and leading sanctioned by the Proclamation issued by your good self, dated July 1st—had they been any fears before that time, the property of foreigners, was safe and would be accorded that protection, as stated in the Proclamation, had been granted heretofore to that property, under the United States laws, the purchasers of these sugars were anxious to ship them at a time when such other shipments were being made; but by your order as aforesaid, they were prevented, thereby casting upon the foreigner a very great loss. But as the undersigned are disposed to waive all past proceedings, they beg that the sugars may be released, removed, of the produce in question be taken and that the undersigned, if consider proper, may be at the disposal of the purchasers, to be with them as they may seem fit, or that the undersigned, if consider proper, may be at liberty to ship the same with the interest accrued, to Europe, as the facts which caused such order to be issued; the entering and existence of which immediately retarded and stops the legitimate business of our country men.

We beg to remain, sir,

Your obedient servants,

(Signed) GEORGE CORNELL,
H. S. M. Acting Consul.
(Signed) CH. MEJAN,
French Consul.
(Signed) M. W. BENACHI,
Greek Consul.

To Maj.-General Benj. F. Butler, Commanding Department of the Gulf, New Orleans, La.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE GULF, }
New Orleans, June 19, 1862. }

Gentlemen—In the matter of the sugars in possession of Mr. Covas, who is the only party known to the United States authorities, I have examined with care the statement you have sent me. I had before me, the same facts which you will not expect me to discuss, that Mr. Covas had been engaged in buying Confederate notes, giving for them sterling exchange, and thereby adding to the credit of the Rebels in the rebellion, and enabling these bills of credit to be converted into bullion to be used there, as it has been, for the purpose of purchasing arms of war. That Mr. Covas in this was one of and the agent of an association or company of Greek merchants residing here, in London and in Havana, who had set apart a large sum for this transaction. That these Confederate notes so purchased by Mr. Covas, had been used in the purchase of sugars and cotton, of which the sugars in question, in value about $200,000, are a part.

I directed Mr. Covas to hold these sugars, until this matter could be investigated.

I am satisfied of the substantial truth of this representation. Mr. Covas's own books will show the important facts that he sold sterling exchange for Confederate Treasury notes, and then bought these sugars with the notes.

How this is claimed to be "strictly mercantile"

It will not be denied that the sugars were intended for a foreign market.

But the Government of the United States had said that with the port of New Orleans there should be no "strictly mercantile" transactions.

It would not be consistent for a moment that the exchanging of specie for Confederate Treasury notes and purchase of the goods to Europe, to enable the rebels to buy arms and munitions of war there, were not a breach of the blockade, as well as a violation of the neutrality of the proclamation of their Majesties the Queen of Great Britain and the Emperor of France. What distinguishes the two transactions, but delivering the sterling bills to a merchant and receiving the goods instead of the rebel bills, and thus sending bullion in specie, and thus assist the rebellion in the point of its utmost need?

It will be seen from this, to assist the rebellion, was not the motive.

Granted "*causa sequenti!*"

It was done from the desire of gain, as Southern all the inducements of neutrality have been done by citizens during this war—a motive which is not unnatural to one by a foreigner, whom, if done by a citizen, would be pronounced of high treason.

My proclamation of May 1st assured property to all persons and *properly* that were respectable, and citizens of other places do or less peaceable manner, nor a muzzle to deprive the property of these citizens of the rebellion, whether citizens, aliens, even I might find here. If members of the Greek nation have been engaged in aiding the rebellion, either directly or indirectly, from a spirit of gain, and they now find themselves objects of unfeeling supervision by the authorities of the United States, they will find the same disposition on the part of the military to consult their interests as they may seem fit, or that the undersigned, if consider proper, may be at liberty to ship the same with the interest accrued, to Europe, as the facts which caused such order to be issued; the entering and existence of which immediately retarded and stops the legitimate business of our country men.

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