A Year's Work.

Sitting beside the casement
In the chill October day,
While Twilight, wrapped in her misty veil,
Was sobbing her life away;
Hearing the tinkle of the beck,
And the chirp of the lingering bird,
And the whistle of the home-bound hind,
And the low of the distant herd;
Watching the red leaves floating down
From the branches one by one;
Thinking of all that a year could do,
Of all that a year had done.

Sweet as an April morn it rose,
The love that had failed so soon,
Strewing her path with bright May flowers,
Brilliant and warm as June.
It drooped in August's fervid smile,
It fell like the year's last rose;
She will scarcely trace its resting-place
'Neath December's coming snows.
The blossoms will bloom into life again
At the call of the summer sun,
But nor time nor tide can undo for her
What a single year has done.

Sitting beside the casement
Till the stars gleam through the firs,
The large tears dropping, slow and cold,
On those folded hands of hers.
They glitter as bright in the red fire-light
As the diamond that she wore
Ere she drew it off, the mocking pledge
Of a troth whose truth was o'er.
The hollow darkness around her creeps;
The day's long watch is run;
And all that they swore but Death could do,
A little year has done.

—*Tinsley's Magazine.*

THE UNIVERSAL MONEY.

The Royal British Commission on International Coinage.

From the N. Y. Evening Post.

In February last the Government of Great Britain appointed a commission of fourteen leading financiers, under the presidency of Viscount Halifax, to examine and report upon the recommendations made by the International Monetary Conference of 1867; and, in particular, to inquire "whether it would be desirable to make any, and what, changes in the coinage of the United Kingdom, in order to establish, either wholly or partially, such conformity as the conference had in contemplation."

It will be remembered that the conference recommended a single legal standard of value in all nations, to consist of gold coin, containing nine-tenths pure gold; that all gold coins should be of the value of five francs, or a multiple of five francs; and that a gold coin of twenty-five francs should, in such countries as might prefer it to the napoleon or louis of twenty francs, be received everywhere as an international coin.

The Royal British Commission included several members of Mr. Disraeli's ministry, the Governor of the Bank of England, the Master of the Mint, Mr. Airy, the famous mathematician and astronomer, Baron Rothschild, Mr. Thomas Baring, and others, the most competent men in England for the work. Each of these gentlemen is addressed, under the privy seal and with the Home Secretary's signature, thus:—"Victoria, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, to our right trusty and well-beloved Cousin and Councillor, Charles Viscount Halifax," etc.; but of course, though all the members of the commission are "trusty and well beloved," none not noble is "our cousin." The commission met in March last, and continued the inquiry at intervals of four months, devoting to the subject more care and study than it ever before received. They called to their assistance everybody in England whose special knowledge seemed likely to help them; among them the well-known authors, Professor Leone Levi, Mr. Walter Bagshot, Sir John Bowring, and many of the leading bankers, bullion dealers and traders of the kingdom. The result is the huge folio volume now before us of three hundred and seventy-two pages, containing a complete thesaurus of information on every question even remotely connected with international coinage. This has just been presented to Parliament, and contains so many and so conflicting views, that it is likely to take that body a good deal longer then the present session to make any legislation on the subject, if it does not take new commissioners and more blue-books to settle it.

The report of the commission itself, however, is but a very small part of the book, which consists chiefly of the evidence and opinions of experts and others, taken by the commission, and of the documentary information they have collected. The latter includes the complete record of the Paris Monetary Conference, with the preliminary correspondence which led to it, and the official proceedings which followed it, full accounts of the mint regulations and coinage of all nations; and a collection of statistics illustrating the whole subject. Among these documents are the full report of the Director of the United States Mint for last year; the various coinage bills now pending before Congress, with the reports made last summer by the Finance Committee upon them, and other American papers of interest; among them the striking suggestions of Mr. George F. Dunning, Director of the New York Assay Office, for giving the size and weight of the new gold coins a simple relation to the units of the metrical weights and measures, as well as to the weight of the common Troy grain.

But it is in the evidence originally gathered by the Commission itself, and not before published, that the peculiar value of this report consists. Perhaps no one's testimony had more influence than that of Professor Leone Levi, who teaches the principles of commerce at King's College, and has written a valuable work on taxation. He showed in the strongest light the great and growing importance of a uniform currency among all nations; and was able to prove, by the examples of several nations in Europe, that a radical change in the coinage, or even in the general system of weights and measures, is not such an alarming revolution as the conservative British mind generally supposes.

It appears from Mr. Levi's figures that the French metric system of weights and measures has already been made the only legal standard by fifteen or more Governments, ruling 146,000,000 people; that portions of that system have been adopted by seven other nations, with 68,000,000 inhabitants, and that it has been made "permissive" among 60,000,000 more. All this has been accomplished easily, and with a cheerful and intelligent acquiescence on the part of the people. Further, the international trade of civilized countries has increased one hundred and sixty-seven per cent. within twenty years, and now amounts to $7,000,000,000 a year, all of which is encumbered, taxed, and delayed so far as the standard money of the different nations differs. In short, the ultimate adoption of a universal coinage is inevitable; the real question is, what shall it be?

On this point, Professor Levi strongly insists on abandoning all thought of reducing the English sovereign to the value of twenty-five francs, as the Paris Conference suggested. The suggestion was made, it seems, simply as an accommodation to England; and because of the accident that the sovereign or pound is now worth almost exactly twenty-five francs; exceeding that sum by only twenty French centimes, or four cents. But if it were made exactly twenty-five francs, it would still not be the international unit of coinage. The continental gold circulation consists of pieces of twenty and ten francs; accounts are kept in francs and hundredths, and if English coins and accounts take a piece of twenty-five francs with its multiplies and parts, as the unit, there is still a calculation necessary, and half of the old confusion remains.

For these and many similar reasons Professor Levi urges the adoption by all nations of ten francs as the monetary unit, and would have Great Britain set the example. But on this point his views did not impress the Commissioners so strongly as on the rejection of the new twenty-five franc sovereign. This they agreed to unanimously; reporting that, after full consideration, "we do not recommend that this country should merely adopt a gold coin of the value of twenty-five francs, to be substituted for the sovereign." But while discountenancing this plan, the Commission does not propose any definite substitute. Its aim has been rather to collect information and prepare the way for a more intelligent discussion, and the report concludes with suggesting a general international conference on the subject.

Among the most interesting and convincing testimony in favor of assimilating the coinage of all nations was that of Mr. Alfred Field, now of Birmingham, formerly of New York, whose experience in trade with the United States enabled him to make the practical advantages of such a change very striking. Mr. Field showed the commission an invoice of his own goods just shipped to New York. It contained four hundred and twenty-one different pieces, charged in English currency; and each of these has to be reduced by the importer, separately, to American money, and an estimate made upon it, of what it will bring in New York. Now, the total value of this lot of goods was £253 sterling, or $1225—an average of less than three dollars at each of the rates calculated. Now, the trouble and time required for this are a serious obstacle to trade and a large addition to the cost of such articles to the consumer.

Mr. Field's illustration from the Halifax trade is still more striking. Goods are bought in Birmingham by tons, cwts., quarters, and pounds, at so many £ s. p. per ton; duties are paid in Halifax in gold dollars and cents; expenses are paid in the local currency, in which 16s. make £1 sterling, and books and bank accounts are kept in dollars, while customers buy in the local currency, or in sterling, or in decimal currency, as the case may be; perhaps "tons, cwts., quarters, and pounds sold say at £15 15s. 6d. per ton, Halifax currency." Now, he inquires, "I should like you to conceive what is the amount of labor involved in that; do you think that any man does that for nothing?"

In practice, says Mr. Field, importers not only have to keep more clerks, but they have to charge a percentage to cover the risks of mistakes in such complicated calculations. Besides, the business of brokers in exchange and foreign coin is now a very large and profitable one; and its profits are largely a mere hindrance to trade growing out of differences in the currency of different countries. In some of these points all the commercial witnesses agreed. The conviction was strong in their minds that the practical effect of different currencies as a hindrance to trade is far greater than is commonly believed—far greater than any one, who has not observed it on a large scale and for a long time, can imagine. But a large number of these gentlemen insisted that the reduction of the British sovereign and of the American half eagle to the value of 25 francs is the only change really necessary, and is so easy and obvious that it ought to be adopted, without attempting any more radical reform.

Mr. Bagehot, the editor of the *Economist*, stated in a very clear light the necessity of having one money of account in all nations, as more important even than a uniform coinage. But he objected earnestly to the franc as too small for the unit of a monetary system; preferring the sovereign, or the proposed new sovereign of twenty-five francs, as the basis of a new decimal system. In rejecting the franc the Commission agreed with him. "I should like," he says, "to make it a condition of this country adopting the twenty-five franc piece and making it the unit of account, that other nations should do the same." "The unit of account is, in my mind, the primary matter, and everything else is secondary to it."

The Blue Book before us contains very full information on the present state of coinage everywhere; on the importance of a single standard, and that of gold, for money values; on the advantages of a uniform proportion of alloy in coin, which all agree ought to be rather one-tenth, as in France and the United States, than one-twelfth as in England; on the propriety of charging mintage or a seignorage for coining the precious metals; and on the measures necessary to secure uniform values, and to obtain protection against fraud, if an international coinage be adopted. But the report is essentially preliminary, and contains no positive recommendation for immediate legislation. It will doubtless lead to a further and general discussion of the subject in England, and perhaps in all the nations interested.

RITUALISM.

The Manner in Which Christmas was Celebrated at St. Alban's, New York.

The New York *Tribune* of Saturday says—How astounded the ordinary Episcopal mind of America must have been to have witnessed the manner in which the great festival of Christmas was yesterday observed at the Church of St. Alban, on the corner of Lexington avenue and Forty seventh street. It is no use shutting one's eyes to facts, and it is undoubtedly a fact that Ritualism has planted itself in this city of New York. The English people have for five years been busily occupied in refusing to recognize Ritualism in any shape or way, but the people of England have since come to the conclusion that the principle of ignoring does not answer, and they are now foolishly endeavoring to shut the stable door after the steed has been stolen. Ritualism has by no means confined itself to Great Britain. It has branched out in all directions, and has not lost sight of the United States of America in its wanderings. Father Morrill, of St. Alban's, is the great follower and exponent of Ritualism, or, as it should be more properly termed, Sacramentalism, in this country; and, to judge from the character of the services held in St. Alban's Church yesterday, he is a very apt disciple, and one who, whatever his opponents may think, is not to be lightly esteemed. At about quarter before 10 on Christman morning the little Church of St. Alban's was quite crowded. At 10 o'clock the procession, headed by the crucifer (cross-bearer), followed by the choir boys, an acolyte bearing the banner of the blessed sacrament, then the taper-bearers in scarlet cassocks and cottas, another acolyte bearing the banner of St. Alban, proto-martyr of Great Britain, and patron saint of the church, the choir men, and lastly, the priests, wearing richly emboidered white stoles and bivetias, entered the church singing the well-known Christmas hymn, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing." At the termination of the processional hymn, Father Noyes intoned Mattius, the special psalmas being very well chanted by the choir, especially psalm 45. At the conclusion of the morning service, the priests retired to the vestry, preparatory to the great function of the day, High Mass. After a few minutes' interval they re-entered the chancel vested in the sacrificial vestments, preceded by the taper-bearers in scarlet cassocks and cottas, and the thurifer swinging the thurible containing incense. The Introit ended, the priests advanced to the pace steps of the altar, the celebrant kissing the altar, the others reverently bowing, and the celebration of High Mass began, the music being set to Mozart's Twelfth Mass. Father Morrill, vested in laced alb, amice, cha uble, and maniple, was Celebrant; Father Noyes, in plain alb and dalmatic, served as Deacon, and Father Mines, in plain alb and tunicle, as Sub-Deacon. Incense was offered during the singing of the sequence, "Adeste Fideles," and the Gospel was then read by the Gospeler, attended by two acolytes bearing the Gospel Lights. The Kyrie (Merbeck's) was admirably done by the Choir, and after some ecclesiastical announcements had been made by Father Morrill, Father Mines proceeded to the pulpit, from which he delivered a very carefully composed and elaborate retrospect of the fulfilment of prophecy, as exemplified in the events attending the birth of our Saviour, and which lessons he implored his hearers to consider as belonging to themselves as much as to the Jews of old, who so obstinately refused to listen to them. At the termination of this discourse the Offertory Sentences were sung by the choir, during which the offerings of the congregation were collected, and the elements were reverently brought from the credence table to the altar, and which, together with the alms, were offered on the altar by the celebrant during the prayer for the Church militant. The actual celebration of the Holy Eucharist was then commenced, incense being again offered before the prayer of Consecration. There was a slight hesitation noticeable among the choir during the singing of the Sanctus and the Veni Creator, but as the score is here rather catchy, some little allowance for an amateur choir ought in all fairness to be made; but these little shortcomings were amply compensated for by the admirable rendering of the Agnes Dei, or hymn of adoration of the spiritual and ineffable presence in the Blessed Sacrament, in which the soprano voice, though a little nervous at first, sang out with a fulness and richness which added much to its solemnity. During the singing of the Agnus Dei, the celebrant first communicated himself and then the other priests. The general body of the communicants (a considerable portion of the congregation) then approached the altar, and, when all had communicated and the Gloria in Excelsis had been sung, the celebrant proceeded with the consumption of the remaining consecrated elements and the ablution of the sacred vessels, after which he gave his benediction to the assembled congregation. The procession was again formed in the same order in which it entered the church, and slowly retired, singing the Nunc Dimittis as a recessional. At 5 o'clock Vespers were sung, the service being identical with that of Christmas Eve. The Curistmas Festival will be observed at St. Alban's during the Octave, *i. e.*, the next seven days.

GENERAL GRANT.

His Opinion on the Railroad Subsidies.

The Washington correspondence of the Baltimore *Sun* of Dec. 24 says:—

The reports of a conversation between General Grant and several Congressmen yesterday relative to Pacific Railroad subsidies, printed in the papers of yesterday and to-day, are claimed by some to be exaggerations, but upon inquiry it appears that there was ground for a portion of the statement at least. In the conversation reference was made to General Grant's approval of the structure, etc., of the Union Pacific Railroad after his recent travel over the route, and which was published in the papers a few days ago. General Grant made a remark, in substance, that although he found the Union Pacific in the excellent condition represented, he had said nothing about granting subsidies to railroads. Those who knew this did not understand General Grant as opposing the existing grants and subsidies, but as (merely by implication) indicating his disapproval of further subsidies to projected roads, or the granting of lands and bonds, except what have been contemplated and provided for by the existing laws. There are reasons for supposing that General Grant's views as to the granting further subsidies of any kind, and also upon the matter of retrenchment and economy, coincide with the well-understood opinions of Mr. Washburne, of Illinois.

The N. Y. *Times'* correspondent says:—

Some correspondents and some papers attach undue importance to certain alleged utterances of General Grant made within the past few days. It cannot be reliably ascertained that General Grant has lost any of the reserve or discretion that have always characterized his utterances.

What he has said may be briefly summed up in a terse expression of opposition to any increase of the national debt so long as there is any party in the country in favor of repudiating it, and that the repeal of the Tenure-of-Office act would be conducive to a thorough reform of the public service. No one need fear that General Grant is about to inflict his views on the country in advance of his official declarations, or that he will assume the *role* of dictator to Congress at any time.

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