

to serve them, and I am profoundly sensible of the responsibility of engaging in a mission in which my best exertions might fall far short of their expectations. Under all the circumstances, however, I feared that the responsibility of declining might be greater even than that of failing in the enterprise. I felt also, that other bonds of the State, in the hands of other companies, by forced sales, at low rates, might indefinitely postpone, or involve in a common fate, the sale of those given to the rail road company; and I entertained some hope that I might promote an arrangement by which the whole could be disposed of at a fair value. Such an arrangement, however, could not be accomplished without including these parties in London who had lent money upon the hypothecation of the bonds issued to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company; and in this view my visit to Europe could scarcely be dispensed with.

On my arrival in London, I found the condition of American stocks even worse than had been by any one anticipated. There had been no period, during ten years previous, when it would have been more difficult to sell a large amount of such securities. This depression and the state of the money market had been in a great measure produced by the previous large importations of grain into England, and the correspondent importation of gold. In order to raise the exchanges and obtain the requisite amount of gold, the Bank of England had resorted to all the means it could safely employ, to render money scarce; and, amongst others, had raised the rate of interest to six per cent. The demand for money, in consequence of the great extent of rail roads in England, contributed to make it scarcer; and if the money market had been in its usual state, the demand would have been greater, and the rate of interest higher than it was prior to 1836. To these causes must also be added the great amount of American securities exposed to ruinous sales. The Maryland Sterling Bonds, especially, could not be disposed of in large amounts, at any price; they were retailing, in small sums, at very reduced rates, and apprehensions were entertained that they would be disposed of at forced sales, at even greater sacrifices.

In this state of things, my relation to the State,—having been entrusted by the Treasurer with a considerable amount of bonds on public account,—not less than my regard for the interests of the rail road company, dictated a caution of which I was in no degree unmindful.

Ascribing the situation of other bonds to the exigencies of the companies to whom they had been given, in no wise affecting the ability or prudence of the State, I declined introducing the bonds committed to me into the market, at a less price than ninety per cent., which, calculating the difference in exchange, would be considerably above the par value of a six per cent. stock.

Under these circumstances, a suitable arrangement for the future disposal of the bonds became my paramount duty. It was obvious that the redundant supply of American stocks would con-