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SATURDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 9, 1882.

COLORLESS GOVERNOR-GENERALS.

We do not very often take the trouble to expose the old fogyism of the Globe, as that paper now seems to have entirely got outside of the current of popular opinion. As a party organ it is one of the most violent in the country, yet as a political organ it is now only a cipher. We, it is well known, have always advocated the idea of Canadian independence. We have challenged argument against our contention, and the best we get is something like the following sentence from yesterday's Globe:

"It is a great advantage to Canada to have as the occupant of the vice-regal office a man free from suspicion of partizanship."

Upon this assumption it justifies the practice of selecting our governors in Great Britain, and rejoices in the possession of the Marquis of Lorne, because he rises above the influences of party tumult.

Let us examine this. The highest and most sacred civil duty, the trust that above all others demands integrity in its administrator, is the administration of justice. But the men taken to fill this high place are not colorless men, but nearly in every case the most prominent and active of party politicians. Does the writer of the sentence we have quoted think our judiciary impure because the judges when raised to the bench were not colorless men? It is a piece of intelligence surely for us at this hour of the nineteenth century to learn that an impartiality is needed in the governor, whose mission is to sign documents which it is not necessary for him to read, and is not needed in the judge into whose sole hands are placed the most sacred rights of the people.

We had at any rate thought that some of our governors used to be, upon a time, party politicians. Indeed, we have a dim remembrance that our own worthy lieutenant-governor was once engaged actively in party politics. This, however, may be all a delusion. But if it is not, we cannot see any great reason why the governor-general should be a non-party man when appointed to his place, so long as a previous career of partisanship does not disqualify the lieutenant-governor. Nor can we here admit that there is any difference in kind—but only in degree—in the functions of the two governors; for we have it on the authority of the Globe itself that M. Letellier was right in dismissing his ministry, but that the Ottawa government was wrong in dismissing Letellier.

And if disproving the Globe's proposition on two totally different grounds be not sufficient, we shall disprove it once more by a two-fold case, either of which alone is also capable of disproving it. Under constitutional government as now developed the governor is merely the receptacle where the authority of the government resides. He is merely the administrator of the wishes of the majority of the people as expressed through the executive council. He has nothing whatever to do with public questions. He often knows little or nothing about such questions, and if he began to interfere we would soon have over again the times of William Lyon Mackenzie. Therefore it doesn't matter three straws whether the governor be whig or tory. His business is to go through certain forms, sign papers and administer the policy of the executive council.

The other and fourth disproof will be found in answer to the following absurdity:

"The stress of party controversy is so intense at times that in case of a constitutional difficulty arising the elevation of the head of the government above the strife and clamor of contending parties gives a stability and security to our institutions which they would not otherwise possess."

Since our present colorless governor came to Canada "a constitutional difficulty" has arisen, as the Globe will remember, over M. Letellier. What "stability and security to our institutions" did the action of Lord Lorne on that occasion give? He referred the question to Downing street, but the colonial secretary referred it back again and said, "Be guided by your ministers." The Globe's editor is a sort of Rip Van Winkle. He is like a man who had fallen asleep when Lord Metcalfe "ran" things his own way, and only awoke yesterday thinking the autocrat still ruled.

No there is only one ground of defence for importing a governor. He is the frail, the only link that couples together two countries nearly 2000 miles apart; and the man who gives any other reason, besides showing himself disloyal to the intelligence and manhood of his own country is hardly worth the notice of his compeers.

AN IRISH ALIEN ACT.

A cloud like a man's hand, a newspaper man's hand, has appeared on the calm sky reaches that stretch from the dominions of brother Jonathan and his affectionate relative John Bull. Michael Davitt, one of the Irish nationalist leaders, has refused to surrender the right of free speech under the threat of imprisonment. True, he is not an American citizen by birth, but in the excited state of American feeling if it once gets sensitive on the subject of violation of the rights of American citizenship by England, that consideration would not go for much. True that in 1798 England sized Wolf Jones though a French citizen and colonel and would have executed him, had he not redeemed the life of a Catiline by the death of a Cato. But in 1798, England had nothing to gain and nothing to lose by setting at nought public opinion in France. In 1882 public opinion in America is something not to be disregarded. And it is evident that this game will continue to be played by the American Irish and their sympathizers. Men whose citizenship is undoubted will dare the English government to imprison them for speeches of political criticism which an American government would venture to punish by incarceration. And sooner or later such policy must lead to friction, and a more hostile feeling towards England than has existed since 1812. The only remedy would be to pass an Irish alien act.

ANOTHER English mansion, Stanford Court, in Worcestershire, the seat of Sir Francis Winnington, has been destroyed by fire, with its costly and rare contents. The frequency of fires in grand English residences suggests the uncomfortable idea of incendiarism.

THE death of Louis Blanc, which occurred at Cannes yesterday, will create quite a sensation in France. As journalist, historian, revolutionist, exile and patriot, the deceased had won renown, and the socialists will mourn his loss.

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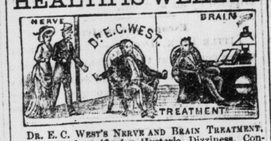

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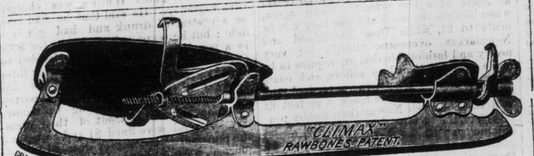

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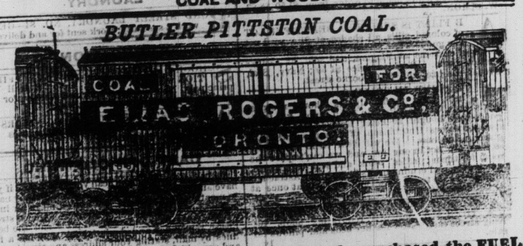

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