

The greatest beast is the Ass; the greatest bird is the Owl;
The greatest fish is the Oyster; the greatest man is the Fool.

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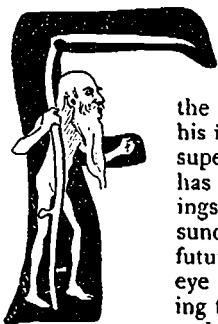
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TORONTO, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1892.

THE *World* has had a series of sensational articles concerning the newly established Political Union Club of this city, and the growth of annexation sentiment. The tone of its utterances is a sufficient testimony to the reality and importance of the agitation. Until lately the loyalists loftily affected to pooh-pooh the whole business, and treat it with silent contempt as the fad of a few busybodies and notoriety-seekers. All of a sudden the *World* has swung round to the opposite extreme, scents annexationism everywhere, predicts bloodshed if the discussion of the subject is allowed, and calls on the authorities to put detectives on the track of those suspected of being annexationists. Obviously, if the traitors are anything like so numerous as the *World* declares, it would require Pinkerton's whole army to take care of them. Is the *World* man himself a traitor, seeking an excuse to bring a horde of foreign mercenaries into the country for the overthrow of our institutions? The Ottawa Government had better make him a Cabinet Minister at once, before the thing goes any farther.

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FOOLISH as the *World's* utterances are, to do it justice we do not suppose that there is a single member of its staff, from editor down to the freshest reporter, who is capable in his individual capacity of making such a superlative ass of himself as the paper has done editorially in its loyalty vapors and threats of violence to all and sundry who dare to discuss Canada's future. The proprietor, with a shrewd eye to the main chance, is simply willing to trade on the narrow-mindedness and prejudices of a large but fortunately decreasing element, who pride themselves on their old-fogyism and who retain the ideas and traditions of the eighteenth century. The ascendancy of such survivals of the mediæval epoch is one of the penalties of living in a colony.

NO intelligent person in these days—unless hired to think otherwise—regards government as a sacred, inviolable institution. Divine right is an exploded notion. Government exists merely as a public convenience, by the consent of the governed. There is no more sacredness attaching to it than to a bank, an insurance company, a trade union or any other association of men for practical business purposes. Any citizen of any country has a perfect right to urge upon his fellow-citizens changes in the form or scope of the government, a transference of the sovereignty from one government to another, or the abolition of all government whatever. And any one who denies him that right, or seeks to interfere with him in its exercise does not know the meaning of the word "liberty," and is unfit for citizenship in a free country. If it will give any satisfaction to the *World*, we are perfectly willing to admit that there are any number of Americans just as superstitious, as narrow-minded and as prone to bow down and worship the Flag setch as the most besotted of Canadian loyalists.

* * *

IT is true also that a century or so ago in England people were hanged for talking treason when they expressed dissatisfaction with the reigning dynasty. Yes, and thousands of poor old women were burned for witchcraft and men strung up at every assizes for sheep-stealing and similar offences. The class of people for whom the *World* caters are just about on a par as regards common sense, enlightenment and humanity, with those who perpetrated such acts of savagery in the name of justice.

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THE extent to which the consumers of this country are robbed by the protected industries is shown by the recent action of the Dominion Cotton Mills Company—the combine which owns all the cotton mills in the country—which has decided to water its capital to the extent of ninety-five per cent. The object of this is to conceal from the public the extent of its profits. If the company acknowledged paying twenty-five per cent. dividends to its shareholders, even a Tory could realize that he was being plundered by the cotton barons. But by calling into existence by a stroke of the pen \$1,350,000 of new "capital," and dividing it up among the stockholders in the ratio of their present holdings, the ostensible rate of dividend is reduced, and in case the public complain of high prices or the employees of low wages, the subsidized organs of the monopolists can point out that the company realize only twelve per cent. or so on their investment. It is an old dodge, but there are still plenty of people who can be fooled by it.

* * *

THERE is serious trouble ahead for Sir John Thompson over the Roman Catholic demand for remedial legislation in Manitoba. Mr. Chapleau, whose retirement from the Ministry to accept the Quebec Lieut. Governorship has been announced, intimated in a speech at Hochelaga that a refusal of the Ultramontane demand would re open the whole question of Confederation. Dr. Lachapelle, the newly elected Tory member for Hochelaga, took occasion to intimate his entire subservency to the dictates of the clergy. He deserves credit, at least, for his frankness. These people have, at all events, the courage of their opinions, and in this respect set a worthy example to a lot of shifty, weak-kneed and truckling Ontario politicians of both parties, who, while professing a belief in equal rights, are ready to sacrifice their