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CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1874.

The new British Cabinet is now definitively formed. We give the official list of its members in another column. On Saturday, the 21st inst., Mr. Disraeli went to Windsor, amid the cheers of the people at every station, and received from Her Majesty's hands, the seals of office. The event must be one of unmixed gratification to Mr. Disraeli personally. When he carried his Reform Bill through Parliament, in 1868, the croakers foretold that he was digging his own grave and that of his party, by so extending the suffrage as to give a preponderating influence to the democratic element. He contended that the people of England were prepared for all the electoral privileges which he conferred on them, and that they would use the gift intelligently and patriotically. So far as he is concerned, his prophecy has been fulfilled. The people have exercised their franchise so freely and judiciously that they have returned him to power by a very handsome majority. To that extent, therefore, Mr. Disraeli has increased his influence and prestige. There is another circumstance which adds to his strength. The Conservative party is at present united, as it has not been for years. The Marquis of Salisbury and the Earl of Carnarvon who had seceded from Mr. Disraeli, in 1868, have coalesced with him again and accepted seats in his Cabinet. They are both very clever men. The former, as head of the Indian department, will doubtless continue that energetic management which distinguished his former incumbency. The latter has already won laurels in the Colonial office and there is no doubt that his assumption of it again will prove an acquisition. Most of the members of the new administration are tried men. The Earl of Derby is, by universal consent, one of the best Foreign Secretaries England has ever had. He is cool, moderate and plain-spoken. He will uphold the dignity of the Empire without flinching, as he did in the case of the neutralization of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, five years ago. Baron Cairns is an eloquent, powerful man and he will prove an ornament to the woolsack. There will be curiosity to see Sir Stafford Northcote at work as Chancellor of the Exchequer and to discover whether he merits the confidence of his chief in his choice over Mr. Ward, who formerly held that important position. Mr. Gathorne Hardy has always been a devoted lieutenant of Mr. Disraeli and he will doubtless be prepared to do efficient service in his new office. Mr. Disraeli finds himself in a very satisfactory situation indeed. His majority is not so large as was Mr. Gladstone's in 1868, but it is a compact one, and just great enough to keep him always on the alert to maintain it up to its present standard. Besides, it is a spontaneous majority. It comes fresh from the people, to whom Mr. Gladstone and not he had appealed. It sprung up in spite of all that influence which the late government naturally exercised to repress it. Proper management is all that will be required of Mr. Disraeli during the next session at least, and there is reason to believe that he will acquit himself satisfactorily of that duty. He knows men well and has shown remarkable abilities as a leader. The general feeling of the British press is that the new administration should be allowed a full and fair trial.

It is to be extremely regretted that the editors of certain political journals cannot be made to see the impropriety of venting their spite against political opponents by the publication of personal items of a damaging character. One of our Montreal dailies, the organ of the Opposition, recently published among its Ottawa despatches an item stating that the Premier visited the Knox Church Bazaar and expended one dollar. There is very little in the statement itself, but it is only too evident that the correspondent who furnished it did so with the intention of raising a laugh at Mr. Mackenzie's expense.

There is but one epithet which can be bestowed upon such conduct—dirty; and it is surprising that such an underhanded statement should have been allowed to appear in the columns of a paper of such standing and merit as the *Gazette*. To men of the world Mr. Mackenzie's modest expenditure at a bazaar will only be an additional proof of his sagacity and sound common sense. The *Gazette's* peccadillo, however, dwindles to nothing by the side of the tactics recently employed by another Montreal daily against some of its political opponents. The *Witness* in a recent issue distinctly charged a gentleman of the highest respectability in this city, a member of Parliament, with having indulged in the grossest dissipation. A criminal action for libel was the result, and then, and not till then, did the editor of the *Witness* make the damaging confession that the charge was not made "without that positive assurance which, borne out by current report, leads to conviction." And further that, "Mr. Mousseau being Mr. Chapleau's legal partner, a fact which was not present to our minds at that time, may have been the sole cause of the common association of his name with the case." If this is meant as a justification of the statement made by the *Witness* it is certainly one of the most remarkable that have ever appeared in public prints. The editor had forgotten that Mr. Mousseau was Mr. Chapleau's partner, and yet the fact of the partnership led him to associate the names. Such a chain of reasoning is certainly unique. If it should happen that the partner of any Montreal citizen should "fall from grace," or even that it should be said that he did so—as was unjustly said in the case of Mr. Chapleau—it will be well for that citizen to bear in mind that the mere fact of the existence of the partnership, even though it may not be present to the editor's mind at the time, may become the sole cause of the common association of his name with the case—or, in other words, may lead to his being undeservedly pilloried in the columns of the *Witness*. In its character of "the only religious daily"—a phrase, by the way, which unpleasantly calls to mind the kindred expression, "the only true Church,"—the *Witness* would do well to adopt the ninth commandment as a motto, and endeavour to carry out its teaching. It was a standing joke among the Conservatives in Montreal after the last elections that not a man could be found who would confess to having voted for Mr. Devlin. It will be a solemn fact before long, if the *Witness* does not mend its ways and return to the paths of respectability, that not a man will be found to own up to being a subscriber to and supporter of the only religious daily. And what a sad thing that would be.

At a meeting held in this city of the Montreal Branch of the Home League Association, a resolution was passed giving expression to a deep sense of gratification at the results of the late elections in Ireland, which afford the most conclusive proof of the great popularity of the Home Rule League. There is certainly some ground for congratulation in the premises. Mr. Isaac Butt, M.P., for Limerick, and leader of the separatist movement in Ireland, claims eighty-three supporters in the new Parliament, of whom twenty-four were elected in England. If his estimate is correct—and there is no reason to doubt it—the cause of Irish Home Rule is unquestionably looking up. Previous to the recent elections, the impression derived from the British press, was that there were only twenty-four thousand Home Rulers in all Ireland. The result now shows that fully sixty per cent of the Irish constituencies, representing more than one half of Ireland, returned Home Rulers. That this strong delegation will exercise a potential influence in the approaching Parliament appears likely enough, although in the present position of the two great English parties, it may be that they will find it necessary to defer action for a session or two. The new Administration has come into power distinctly pledged against Home Rule. In counting its majority, it classifies Home Rulers with the opposition, and the clear majority upon which it relies is fifty over Liberals and Home Rulers combined. On the other hand, the Liberals, under the circumstances, could not, if they would, openly identify themselves with the Irish national movement. If they did, they would hopelessly split up their ranks in England and Scotland. It is a question whether the Home Rulers could have obtained any concessions from Mr. Gladstone himself, in the event of that gentleman's retention of power. Whatever his own sentiments may have been there were at least two of his most prominent Cabinet Ministers who would have opposed the alliance most strenuously. One was Mr. Lowe who has said that Home Rule was only another name for a dissolution of the Empire. The other was Mr. Goschen who has stated that there was no Home Rule in the bulk of the Liberal party and that he was emphatically opposed to it. Not even Mr. Bright could ever be prevailed upon to pro-

nounce favourably upon the question. Whatever the movement may amount to in time, there seems reason to believe that it will not occupy Parliament this year. As a rallying point it will prove of immense service to Irishmen all over the world, and if it is skilfully managed it will give the Irish vote in Parliament a greater force and *clat* than it can otherwise command. On the merits of the question itself, there is really no room for discussion in advance of that general meeting of Home Rulers in Dublin, to be held on the second of next month.

It may be said of clergymen, as of the heroine of a certain nursery rhyme, that when they are good they are very good, but when they are bad they are horrid. The Rev. Donald M. Owen, rector of Mark's Tey, in the Eastern Counties of England, is evidently one of the horrid members of the cloth. The reverend gentleman—we call him thus by courtesy—has made himself notorious by prosecuting a poor old man of sixty who had served him for five years as sexton, clerk, and gardener, for stealing three pieces of wood, of the value of One Penny, the remnants of some material with which he had been making a drain. The offence was one of such magnitude in the eyes of the magistrates before whom the case was tried that they refused to take less than Twenty Pounds bail. As the case was tried on a Saturday, Mr. Owen doubtless had an opportunity of returning thanks from his place in church next day that he is not as other men are. Which he certainly is not, fortunately.

A question will be taken up at the next session of Parliament in which all the dwellers in cities throughout the country are interested, viz., a free letter delivery. It is absurd that while letters may be sent from one end of the Dominion to the other for three cents, a charge of two cents should be made for every letter delivered by the postman. We are glad to see that Mr. Irving, M.P. for Hamilton, has constituted himself the champion of the citizens in this matter, and has pledged himself to advocate the free delivery of letters in cities by salaried postmen. We trust Mr. Irving's proposal will receive the consideration it deserves. Such a measure would contribute immensely to the popularity of the Ministry.

A hint for the Minister of Militia. A new paper, for the special use of subalterns and first year volunteers in the Prussian army, has been started at Berlin, under the title of the *Unteroffizier-Zeitung*. Its object is to acquaint the young officer with the name and character of all inventions, works, and theories bearing upon his profession, which are exciting the interest of military men abroad or at home. Politics are excluded, but other subjects which may tend to promote the cultivation of the middle classes, from which the German soldiers are chiefly drawn, are freely discussed.

The declaration of principles made by the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, at St. Louis, is not precisely so definite as we should wish it. The aims and objects of the Patrons of Husbandry, as therein stated, are designed to harmonize capital and labour, promote the greatest good of the greatest number, and clothe the brotherhood with all the elements of the highest manhood and citizenship. All this means very little, and unless something more specific is urged, it will end in nothing.

There never was a more striking case of apathy than the indifference displayed by the citizens of Montreal in regard to the proposition for converting the old historic Champ-de-Mars into a central railway depot. It is an arbitrary action the part of the Government even to propose the above use of the ancient ground. The people should be appealed to. Let there be a popular vote on the subject and then the iconoclasts will learn what popular reverence amounts to.

The currency question is the absorbing topic of legislation at Washington, this winter. So far as can be made out three plans are in presence. First, an increase of legal tenders in the sense of pure and simple inflation. Second, an increase of the currency circulation so as to give the South and West an addition of \$40,000,000, making in all \$400,000,000. Third, the establishing of a free banking system, either in specie or Government bonds, at the option of the banks.

The proposed widening of the Erie Canal, if carried out, would reduce the freight on wheat from Chicago to New York from \$6.50 to \$3.50 a ton. This is a wonderful reduction and it would probably defy the competition of the St. Lawrence Canals. There is no doubt that New York is at length awakening from her torpor and when