

## THE SITUATION IN FRANCE.

The friends of France in Canada (and naturally our old motherland and England's valiant ally of a generation since has many well-wishers in the Dominion, of which she laid the foundation) can hardly look with satisfaction on the present situation in the Republic. Here, as in Europe, opinion is divided as to the real significance of Boulangerism. Its principles and designs are shrouded in mystery, and, even of those who support the movement on the ground of its antagonism to the Opportunist régime, the great majority are consciously in the dark as to its ultimate drift and are siding with the cashiered officer at their own peril. There is not, there cannot be, any genuine sympathy between the Royalists, Bonapartists and the vague multitudes of unclassed voters who hearken to any new cry that promises a redistribution of the spoils. How the Comte de Paris came to advise his followers to vote for the General is an ethical and political problem which we will not attempt to solve. The Duc d'Aumale, true to himself, denounced such a coalition as immoral. The *plébiscite* is a Bonapartist engine, and, apart from any hopes which the contest might involve of a Napoleonic restoration, the experiment had a peculiar interest for the friends of the Second Empire. Looked at in the light of M. Jacques' overwhelming defeat, the blind confidence of the Government must be pronounced extraordinary. The ministerial explanations of the issue were excessively weak, and the policy of expression, which was expressly intended to guard against such a surprise in future, was unworthy of a constitutional, not to say democratic, cabinet.

The expectation that immediate resignation would be the upshot of the Ministry's discomfiture was not fulfilled. It seemed even possible for a time that M. Floquet, having stood his ground in the face of such a shock, would succeed in tiding over the crisis. But the feeling of panic, on which General Boulanger had calculated for the confirmation and completion of his triumph, proved stronger than the Premier's self-control, and, to the astonishment of both friend and foe, he resigned on a question of procedure. Even the Count de Douville Maillefeu, who brought forward the motion for the indefinite postponement of revision, avowed that he had no intention of embarrassing the Cabinet, and expressed surprise that M. Floquet had taken seriously the adverse vote. Of course, M. Boulanger gloried in the Ministry's downfall, and, in the chaos of hesitation and perplexity to which it had reduced the Opportunists, President Carnot first sent for M. Méline, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, a man who had won respect for earnestness and honesty. He is chiefly known in connection with the movement (which our own Provincial Government has not disdained to imitate) for giving greater prominence to the agricultural interest in the distribution of honours. To that end he created a special order for the decoration of persons who led the way in agricultural enterprise and reform. After shrinking from the task, M. Méline was finally induced to accept it, but as he failed to form a Cabinet, M. Carnot appealed to M. Tirard, a man of ability, steadiness and experience, who has already had a short turn at the helm of affairs.

The new Premier has selected his colleagues mainly from the ranks of ex-ministers, and none of them are absolutely lacking in capacity. Never-

theless, the late *bouleversement* in Paris brings out nothing more clearly than that, at the present moment, France shows a woful lack of statesmen of the highest class. M. Carnot, on whom the hopes of the republic reposed, has displayed a lamentable feebleness during the last few weeks. That is the view of even those who would fain speak favourably of a man whom they esteem for qualities that merit respect. The situation is certainly such as to test no ordinary ruler and leader of men. But its complexities are largely due to false pretences which a really clear-sighted and energetic statesman would expose and refute. If the Republic could boast of such a statesman, Boulangerism would have neither existence nor excuse. That it is itself nothing but opportunism in a worse form than that which it would replace is evident from its development and methods, and it is to be regretted that men who profess loyalty to France first of all, as the Comte de Paris has hitherto done and the Duc d'Aumale still does, should degrade themselves by such a combination.

## THE PRESS DINNER.

On the occasion of the first annual dinner of the Province of Quebec Press Association at the St. Lawrence Hall, a few evenings since, there was a strong manifestation of national feeling and a unity of sentiment on Canadian national life and progress, from which we augur well for the future relations of the members of the Fourth Estate, and for the exercise by them of a salutary influence upon the large and diversified multitude of readers, whose opinions the Press reflects or moulds. The attendance comprised many leading citizens of Montreal outside the Fourth Estate, who represented the principal branches of commerce and industry as well as the professions. Among them were prominent officials of the two great railway corporations of the country, the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific. One and all testified to the progress which the Dominion had made and to their sanguine anticipations of the future, all being animated by a determination to do their utmost to promote its best and highest interests.

## LITERARY NOTES.

OLD ENGLISH POETRY.—In sharp, striking contrast to the spirit of later poetry, which is so inevitably tinged, if not permeated with Christian feeling and conviction, is the fatalism which runs through Anglo-Saxon song. Some of the epics actually precede the Christian era in England, as is true of our noblest first English poem, "Beowulf." And even the poets of the later centuries, while nominal Christians, are heathen in warp and woof, and their song has much of the brave, sad fatalism which was typical of the Germanic mythology. The gods are powerful, but back of them broods and hides Wyrd, or Fate, the word surviving in a different spelling in our familiar adjective, weird. It is beautiful, in the later poetry, to see the sweeter, brighter Christian influence strike through this gloomy heathenism, as the sun through storm-clouds, bringing light in place of doubt and darkness, and hope instead of a silent acquiescence in the inevitable.

WORDSWORTH'S NEPHEW, THE LATE BISHOP OF LINCOLN.—He was sufficient unto himself, but this must not be regarded as the conceit of the man so much as his irresistible temperament. Within limits, he was one of the best bishops that England has ever had, but the thoughtfully speculative side of life was a side which he never touched—hardly understood. His great strength lay in his learning, in his humility, in his saintliness. He was a good and true and honest ecclesiastic, and his legacy to the English Church is the fruit alike of his scholarship and of his piety, in defending its doctrines and in illustrating what the piety of its members should be like. There is little stimulating life in the extended biography. There is a great amount of activity, but it is that sort of work which is not in the trend of controlling ideas. It is rather the reiteration of historical positions. Dr. Temple, who is at once a thinker and a scholar, is a far better type of the modern bishop.

BLAKE, THE POET-ARTIST.—In society, Blake would give accounts of romantic appearances which had shown themselves to him. At one of Mr. Aders' parties—at which Flaxman, Lawrence and other leading artists were present—Blake was talking to a little group gathered round

him, within hearing of a lady whose children had just come home from boarding-school for the holidays. "The other evening," said Blake, in his usual, quiet way, "taking a walk, I came to a meadow, and at the farther corner of it I saw a fold of lambs. Coming nearer, the ground blushed with flowers; and the wattled cote and its woolly tenants were of an exquisite pastoral beauty. But I looked again, and it proved to be no living flock, but beautiful sculpture." The lady, thinking this a capital holiday show for her children, eagerly interposed, "I beg pardon, Mr. Blake, but may I ask where you saw this?" "Here, madam," answered Blake, touching her forehead. The reply brings us to the point of view from which Blake himself regarded his visions. It was by no means the mad view those ignorant of the man have fancied. He would candidly confess they were not liberal matters of fact; but phenomena seen by his imagination; realities none the less for that, but transacted within the realm of mind.

THE FRANCISCANS IN ENGLAND.—Francis returned to Assisi with the Papal sanction for what was probably, a draft of his afterwards famous "Rule." He was met by the whole city, who received him with a frenzy of excitement. By this time his enthusiasm had kindled that of eleven other young men, all now aglow with the same Divine fire. A twelfth soon was added—he, moreover, a layman of gentle blood and of knightly rank. All these had surrendered their claims to everything in the shape of property, and had resolved to follow their good leader's example by stripping themselves of all worldly possessions, and suffering the loss of all things. They were beggars—literally barefooted beggars. The love of money was the root of all evil. They would not touch the accursed thing lest they should be defiled—no, not with the tips of their fingers. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Beggars they were, but they were brethren—*Fratres (Fieres)*. We in England have got to call them Friars. Francis was never known in his lifetime as anything higher than Brother Francis, and his community he insisted should be called the community of the lesser brethren—*Fratres Minores*—for none could be or should be less than they. Abbots and Priors, he would have none of them. "He that will be chief among you," he said, in Christ's own words, "let him be your servant." The highest official among the *Minores* was the Minister, the elect of all, the servant of all, and if not humble enough to serve, not fit to rule.

## PERSONAL.

The Right Rev. Dr. Lewis, Bishop of Ontario, was married on the 20th inst., at the British Embassy, Paris, to Miss Ada Leigh. Bishop Williams, of Quebec, officiated. Lady Lytton and her daughters, the Hon. Hector Fabre, C.M.G. and other prominent Canadians were present.

Mrs. Harriet Waters Preston, accompanied by her niece, Miss Dodge, has been spending the winter in Italy, the great libraries of which historic land she has been turning to advantage for her learned and readable articles on ancient Roman biography in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

Mr. Henry Downes Miles, who died recently at Walworth, England, had begun his career in London journalism as long ago as 1827. He edited for some portion of its short life, the *Constitution*, which was started in 1833, in opposition to the *London Times*. Subsequently, he was associated with the *Crown*, and was for many years one of the editors of *Bell's Life*. He also gained some note as a novelist and essayist. He was in his 83rd year.

Montreal has lately been honoured by a visit from a grandson of the poet Landor. Mr. Henry Savage Landor was born in Florence, his father being the distinguished virtuoso, Mr. Charles Landor, whose tastes he had inherited in a practical form. He is an artist, and, though only twenty-two years old, has gained a fair share of celebrity by his portraits of the Duchess of Edinburgh and the Princess Mary of Teck, sister of the Duke of Cambridge. Mr. Landor has also painted some prominent Bostonians, including Mr. Houghton, of the publishing firm of Houghton, Mifflin & Co. He has travelled extensively, having already passed through a great part of Europe and North Africa, and, after some stay on the Continent, he will push on by the westward route to the far east. In appearance, Mr. Landor is not at all like his poetic grandfather, being in stature, under, rather than over, the average of mankind.

The visit to Montreal of Mr. Douglas Sladen, author of "Australian Lyrics" and other works, ought to give an impulse to Canadian literature. Mr. Sladen, though still a young man, having spent his 33rd birthday in Montreal, has had a somewhat eventful career. Having graduated at Oxford, he turned his thoughts to the new world, not of the west but of the south. Setting out for Melbourne, he accepted the position of Professor of History to the University of that city. At the same time he began to turn to literary account the salient features of Australian life and scenery as they impressed a poetic imagination. The result of his observations and reflections he gave to the world in two volumes: "Australian Lyrics" and a "Poetry of Exiles," which had an extensive sale both in the Colonies and in England. The enterprising London and Newcastle publisher, Walter Scott, engaged Mr. Sladen to write a volume for his series of the *Canterbury Poets*, which came out under the title of "Australian Ballads." The same publisher issued another volume, "A Century of Australian Song," in his *Windsor* series. Meanwhile Mr. Sladen was not neglecting the impulse of his own inspiration, among the fruits of which, besides his Australian songs are "Edward, the Black Prince," an epic drama; "In Cornwall and Beyond the Sea," and "The Spanish Armada." For some time he has been visiting this continent, having resided in Boston, New York, Cincinnati and other American cities, and made acquaintance with the chief American writers. He came to Montreal to see the Carnival and to gather hints for Canada's share in an anthology which he is about to publish of "The Younger Poets of America." He will spend the next few months in Washington, whence he will return to Canada for a stay in the "Ancient Capital."