

CALENDAR FOR WEEK ENDING AUG. 13, 1870.

SUNDAY, August 7.—*Eighth Sunday after Trinity* Name of *J. ans.* Queen Caroline died, 1821.
 MONDAY, " 8.—Louis V. declares the empire of Germany independent of the Pope, 1338. Marshal Ney shot, 1815.
 TUESDAY, " 9.—Battle of Adrianople, 378. Accession of Louis Philippe to the French throne, 1830.
 WEDNESDAY, " 10.—*St. Lawrence.* Battle of Quentin, 1557. Battle of Montmorency, 1759.
 THURSDAY, " 11.—Frobisher's Strait discovered, 1576. Battle of Lake Champlain, 1814.
 FRIDAY, " 12.—Rowland Hill born, 1744. Robert Southey born, 1774.
 SATURDAY, " 13.—Sir P. Maitland, Lieut. Governor.

THE CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, AUGUST 6 1870

The issue of the Queen's proclamation, uniting Rupert's Land and the North-West Territory with Canada; the swearing in of the Hon. A. G. Archibald as Lieutenant-Governor of the new Province of Manitoba, and also, under a separate commission, of the North-West Territory; the progress of the expedition, and the prospect of its early arrival at its destination, all point to the fact that at length, after many false moves and forced halts, another substantial step has been taken towards the Union of the whole of British North America. But it has taken three years to make this one step, and other three steps have yet to be taken before the work is complete. The whole process of Confederation has been slower than its ardent friends anticipated. It took three years from the Quebec Conference to the swearing in of the first Dominion Government; and three years more from the date of that event to the swearing in of the first Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West. We are, therefore, hastening slowly, and perhaps it is as well. The result of the recent elections in Prince Edward Island is supposed to be nearly a tie; but the Anti-Unionists are still in power, and we know how powerful they may be in at least delaying the work on the plea that a stout resistance may secure them "better terms." With respect to Newfoundland the question is postponed for years; and as for British Columbia the means of communication are too circuitous, and the British territory intervening too much of a wilderness to make immediate union of any practical value.

Evidently, then, there is much work to be done before British North America can be united under one Canadian Government. And the chief work in our view lies in lessening the obstacles in the way of internal communication with British Columbia; in other words, in colonizing the North-West and building a railway through it. The North-West has ever been considered of vast importance to Canada—especially has it so been considered in the Western Province; and the first organized Provincial Government, that of Manitoba, must form the central point from which colonization will spread over the whole of the North-West regions. Such will be the case for many years; and the geographical position of Fort Garry is such that, in time, it, or some place in its neighbourhood, must become one of the most important cities in the Dominion. These considerations ought to point out the importance of an early and a vigorous effort to fill up the new Province with settlers and to extend its borders as soon as may be to those of Ontario, so that the United Provinces, so far as they go, may be contiguous.

But there appears to have been developed, in the very Province the most desirous of colonizing the North-West, an intention to convert the newly-acquired territory into a battle-field of party in which the old quarrels of the old Province of Canada are to be fought over again. The two statesmen who completed the arrangement for the transfer of the Territory—Sir George E. Cartier and the Hon. Wm. Macdougall—have, curiously enough, both fallen under the displeasure of some who, two years ago, applauded them for their patriotic exertions in the face of the very serious obstacles and powerful opposition against which they had to contend while negotiating in London. We do not purpose to discuss the causes of this indignation at the present time; we merely note it as one of the vicissitudes of political life. But it might be suggested that the raking up of the embers of old party fires, and blowing them into flame, is not by any means a policy calculated to foster the interests of the country at large, or to promote the settlement of the North-West. On the contrary, if the "fire-eaters" on either side convert the settlement into a hot-bed of party rancour and political excitement, emigrants will shun it, and seek more peaceful homes. It has no rich gold or silver mines to attract the adventurous fortune hunter, even if he has to fight his way with bowie knives and pistols. Its charms are for the quiet and industrious farmers and mechanics—for

men who hope to live by labour, and who desire to labour in peace. Nothing, therefore, can be more conducive to its future progress and prosperity than the speedy establishment of government on the equitable and impartial basis upon which the inhabitants of Manitoba are about to begin the work of local self-government, under a properly constituted representative legislature.

Some excitement has been created by the announcement that the Imperial Government, on the advice of the Canadian, has granted a general amnesty to all parties concerned in the late rebellion. This may, or may not, be true. But supposing it were true, we presume the amnesty can only cover political offences; no amnesty can condone the crime of MURDER. The most that even the Crown can do, in such a case, is to grant a pardon to the guilty, after conviction by a jury and sentence by a judge of the land. These facts should be kept in remembrance by those who accept for gospel a telegraphic despatch from an Ottawa newspaper correspondent. If the Canadian Government did recommend a "general amnesty" for those who openly took part in the rebellion, it appears to us that it was sound advice. Why should the Hudson's Bay officials, who left the fort open to the insurgents, go scot free, if punishment is to be dealt out anywhere? Why did not those who were, by law, responsible for the maintenance of the peace and the Queen's authority, discharge their duties? Were they overpowered? No! That would have been revolution. They abdicated their functions before Canada had any authority to assume them; and before, even if the authority had been extant, she had the means of asserting it. A calm consideration of these facts ought to show the folly of keeping up an excitement about the Red River troubles.

LITERARY NOTICES.

THE PROPHECY OF MERLIN; and other Poems, by John Reade. Montreal: Dawson Bros., 18 0.

Mr. Reade's volume has been for some time before us, and we have deferred noticing it because its merits are such as ought not to be disposed of in a mere complimentary paragraph. But our readers are already familiar with many of his shorter pieces, several of those that have appeared in the *Canadian Illustrated News* being included in the volume. "The Prophecy of Merlin" itself is not altogether unfamiliar, for we copied an extract from it, before it was placed in the printer's hands for publication, in book form. Mr. Reade has for some years held a front rank among the poetical contributors to the periodical press of Canada. Nothing comes from his pen that is not good; nothing that does not reveal the true genius of poetry; and there is much that he writes which shows the flame of the Promethean fire to have been purified by thorough culture and very careful study. Some of his translations—as his "Lake" from Lamartine, and several short pieces from the Greek—have been pronounced by competent judges to be gems of composition, and remarkable for their fidelity to the originals. There are over sixty minor compositions, original or translated, among the "other poems" of the title; and it is safe to say that, if the author's reputation rested upon these alone, he would take honoured rank among the modern English poets—we mean among those who use the English language as the medium of communication with their readers. Of course, we claim Mr. Reade as a Canadian poet, for some of the minor pieces to which we have referred could only have been written by one who was truly Canadian in feeling.

Mr. Reade has heretofore shrunk, with natural timidity, from thrusting himself before the public in any more pretentious manner than through the "Poet's corner" of some newspaper or magazine, though many, without a title of his genius, "write a book" of verses, calling them "poems," and complacently await the world's applause, shewing how true it is that "fools rush in," &c. And now when he has ventured to come before the world with a "book," a few lines from the gentle Whittier, on the blank leaf before the table of contents, is all that rewards the curiosity of those who wish to discover, in the preface, the secret of the author's aim in venturing into print. Some years ago, when Beales, the great agitator, set England agog on the matter of the Hyde Park gatherings, "Cornelius O'Dowd," in his Italian home, was completely puzzled to answer the question, put to him on all sides—"Who is Beales?" But at last he bethought him of an expedient, as an Irishman will, and answered promptly, "Beales! He is our Garibaldi!" Now "Cornelius O'Dowd" knew nothing about Beales, but he satisfied his questioners: and should there be any Canadian who has not yet made himself acquainted with "The Prophecy of Merlin," and who should have to answer the question of some intelligent foreigner, "Who is John Reade?" let him answer at once—"He is our Tennyson!" Beales was like Garibaldi, in that he had made a noise in the world; Reade is like Tennyson, in that he is a true poet; and as "O'Dowd" was ashamed not to be able to give an account of a noisy Englishman, so ought a Canadian be ready with an answer concerning the poet of his country, who at this time is receiving the encomiums of the best judges and most intelligent patrons of Canadian literature.

The main design of the "Prophecy of Merlin" is to pay a tribute to the virtues of the late Prince Albert, and the plot chosen to give effect to it is grand in its simplicity, and truly poetic in its conception. Merlin, the sage and prophet of the good King Arthur's Court at Camelot, appears to Sir Bedivere, the last of the Knights of the Round Table, who is lying wounded, and in deep sorrow at the disappearance of King Arthur. But beyond the fact of adopting these two characters, and some incidental references to the good King's Court, Mr. Reade draws no more upon the Arthurian legends; he builds his structure on the prophetic powers of Merlin. The Knight, whose wounds are healed by Merlin, is eager to find out whether King Arthur will return to earth:

"And will he not assemble round his board
The best and bravest knights of Christendom,
And all the fairest ladies of the land,
And reign as erst he reigned in Camelot?"

Merlin, whose is "the blazonry of prophet souls," then describes to Sir Bedivere the great changes through which the country shall pass, during all of which Arthur shall be the ideal king, though still he "sleeps in Avalon." Space will not permit us to follow the revelation throughout; but after long ages

"The earth and air
Shall yield strange secrets for the use of men;
The planets in their courses shall draw near,
And men shall see their marvels, as the flowers
That grace the meads of summer,—time and space
Shall know new laws, and history shall walk
Abreast with fact o'er all the peopled world;—
For words shall flash like light from shore to shore,
And light itself shall chronicle men's deeds.
Great ships shall plough the ocean without sail,
And steedless chariots shoot with arrowy speed."

"And this fair land of Britain then shall be
Engrailed with stately cities,—and by streams
Where now the greedy wolf roams shall be heard
The multitudinous voice of industry,—
And Labour, incense-crowned, shall hold her court
Where now the sun scarce touches with his beams
The scattered seeds of future argosies,
That to the furthest limit of the world
Shall bear the glory of the British name."

Thus poetically and prophetically does Merlin enumerate all the achievements of science, art, and industry at the time when a Queen,

"Heir to the ripe fruit of long centuries,
Shall reign o'er such an Empire, and her name,
Clasping the trophies of all ages, won
By knightly deeds in every land and sea,
Shall be VICTORIA."

Prince Albert, of "goodly mien and fair," is then introduced as the "Blameless Prince," who reproduces, in their plenitude, the virtues of Arthur. The chief events of his life, including the great exhibition of '51, are indicated in style similar to that quoted above, referring to telegraphy, steam, &c. &c. The death of Prince Albert, the mourning of the Queen and the nation, and other incidents are foreshadowed; after which, in reply to the anxious question of Sir Bedivere, Merlin prophesies that there shall be a Prince bearing the name of Arthur, who

"In a far land beneath the setting sun,

Shall shed new glories upon him we loved."

Nothing could have been more happily expressed, or introduced in better taste, than this allusion to Prince Arthur's visit to this country.

Both Tennyson and Reade deal hardly with Sir Bedivere. In the "Passing of Arthur" he is left standing alone, after having "clomb" sundry craggy heights to watch "the speck that bore the King," until he saw it grow

"From less to less, and vanish into light;"

whereas, in the "Prophecy of Merlin" the bold knight is left

"Alone upon the beach, amid the dead!"

It is to be hoped that Mr. Reade, if he does not choose to relieve the "bold Sir Bedivere" from such a melancholy situation, will, at least, continue to cultivate the art of poetry, in which he has already proved himself a master.

RECEIVED.—Stewart's Quarterly.

The City office of the *Canadian Illustrated News* has been removed from No. 10 Place d'Armes to No. 1 Place d'Armes Hill, first door from the corner of St. James Street.

THEATRE ROYAL.—The Lisa Weber troupe close their performances at the Theatre this evening, after a most successful engagement, during which they have been exceedingly well patronized, having grown in favour as they became better known. They go hence to Quebec, and we can promise the denizens of the ancient capital a rich treat in their operatic burlesques. On Monday evening Miss Ravel will commence a six nights' engagement, and will appear in the drama of the "French Spy."