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OUR CURSTONE
OBSERVER.

On Fluctuations.

HERE is a tide in the affairs of men," says Shakespeare, and he is generally pretty correct in all his statements—even when they are figures of speech. And tides fluctuate very regularly, as all will admit. So in nearly all the affairs of men there are fluctuations. Nothing is stable, nothing positive, nothing immutable. Apart from the Catholic Church and her doctrines, my humble observations have led me to know that fluctuations are in accord with the order of things and of nature. Take for example, the fluctuations of commerce. Like in the Egyptian story told in Holy Writ, when seven years of famine followed seven years of plenty, so has it ever been in each particular country, and in the entire world. Seasons of abundance are followed inevitably by seasons of want, and after these come seasons of plenty again. There is no escape from this law of fluctuation. Just like the tides of the ocean that ebb and flow at stated intervals, with a precision that nothing can change, so in the world of trade will we have a few years of "good times," to be followed by a few years of "hard times." There is the instance of the past few weeks as far as the weather goes; the fluctuations of the thermometer, as it seemed for a long time to be playing Ping-Pong across the zero line. And what is true in so many spheres is equally so in the domain of ideas. But of all the fluctuations none more remarkable to me than those that affect men's opinions—and especially their political opinions. This week, as we feel ourselves drawing closer to an atmosphere charged with election electricity, it might be no harm to use a column to dot down a few observations regarding the fluctuations in ideas that a man in my position can quietly observe.

FLUCTUATIONS OF OPINIONS.—I am no politician; I know very little about any of the grave questions that are being debated in Parliament and in the press; I have no special leanings towards one or the other of the parties contending for power; I know what Protection is, and also the meaning of Free Trade, but bless me, if I could tell you which would be the more beneficial for our country; and even if I had an idea on the subject I would very probably be shown what a fool I am, in such matters, if I attempted to express it. Consequently, whatever I write down as the result of my observations (including the things that I hear as I go along the curstone), I am very far from referring to one or the other political party. I have sufficient confidence in the wisdom and general sense of self-interest that the Canadian people possess to believe that when they pronounce, by a great majority, in favor of any one party, they must feel that the said party is the better of the two for the time being. So I do not give myself the trouble to dispute the popular will, nor would it benefit me, or alter that will even if I were to do so. But I have been often surprised, even astonished, on finding out the wonderful fluctuations of opinion in the minds of observing men. I have met lifelong Conservatives, men who, at one time, would have considered it an impossibility to see anything good in the opposite party, and for one or another reason, they gradually fluctuated and finally fell into the other camp. I have known Liberals who would have staked all they were worth on the cause of that party, who had spent years of life and piles of money in its cause, and who, unexpectedly, and for no apparent reason, began to fluctuate, and finally

OLD PUBLICATIONS.

(By a Regular Contributor.)

Last week I furnished a good deal of information from the "Quebec Almanac of 1821." This week I will confine my remarks and extracts to a few points that may be of interest to some of our readers. Amongst the names that I find before me there are several of persons who were the parents or grand-parents, of present-day subscribers, and these latter may be glad to know about them. I find a long list of the Justices of the

wound up amongst the rank and file of the Conservatives. There may be many explanations for these individual fluctuations that I am not able to give. Possibly the person finds that the party he has been supporting will not give him all the patronage that he wants, or that he sees a better chance to secure favors from the other party. Quite possible that some personal friend, or a relative of his, may have obtained some boon, or is in the field. In fact, there may be a thousand reasons. It is even possible that on due reflection and study he has been honestly converted to the political views of the other party, and in conscience found it incumbent upon to change his allegiance. But with these personal fluctuations it is very different for one like me, devoid of experience to deal. However, this leads to another phenomenon.

GENERAL FLUCTUATIONS.

More remarkable than all these, to my mind, are the sudden and general fluctuations in public opinion that sweep periodically, and tide-like over the country. On the eve of a general election a party stands firmly entrenched in power, on the morrow it is scattered and shattered. One wonders how it is that so many people could have so soon changed opinions; for it is clear that thousands all through the land must have fluctuated, otherwise the result could not have been what it was. I remember the fluctuation of opinion that drove Sir John from power in 1873; that which swept Mackenzie from power in 1878; that which turned a Mercier majority of three-fourths of the House into a mere "corporal's guard." It would remind one of the famous "Destruction of Senacharib":

"Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with the banners at sunset were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn has blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strewn."

I have tried to explain to myself these sudden fluctuations, and I have failed. By dint of observation, however, I have noticed, that as long as a party is powerful and in the ascendant, its friends are loud in their praise and professions, and in numbers are "like the leaves of the forest." But the moment a rumor gets abroad that a party is tottering, like rats that fly from a sinking ship, there are hundreds who begin to fluctuate, and finally a general stampede ensues. This is often the means of doing grave harm, for, like the panic in the fated theatre, men lose their heads, and bring down ruin upon themselves. In some cases it may be for the greater good of the country. But I am a firm believer in cool-headedness, and I do not like the idea of panics. We are very soon to be in a period of intense excitement, and it might be no harm to give a piece of humble advice to all interested. It is to think each one for himself, to keep in view the general good of the country, and it never allow the spirit of mad fluctuation to seize upon oneself. Calmness has saved many a battle, has prevented many a disaster, has been the means of avoiding accidents of a fatal character. If alarms be sounded, study well their meaning, and before rushing to one side or the other in blind fury, recall the advice of Longfellow to live

"In the living present,
Heart in breast and God o'er head."

Peace, appointed by Lord Dalhousie, for the district of Montreal; and amongst them are a good many Irish Catholics. It shows, at all events, that at that early period our people were already of importance and influence in the community. The names that I find in that list are as follows:—

Patrick Murray, James Hughes, George Cook, Henry Mounsey, William Kelly, John Manning, James Finlay, William Byrnes, John Lane, John McGinnis, Thomas McVey, William Moore, Paul Whitty, L. Redmond, Richard McGinnis, Conrad Durrick, James Brown, and A. McMullen.

The lawyers practising their pro-

fession, in Montreal, in that year (many of whom became famous either as jurists or judges afterwards), were:—Stephen Sewell, C. F. Hamelin, David Ross, Joseph Bedard, Denis B. Viger, James Stuart, J. D. Lacroix, Benjamin Beaubien, F. X. Bender, Ant. Ls. Levesque, Jean Roch Rolland, Pierre Dom. Debartzsch, Louis Michel Viger, F. A. Quesset, Samuel Gale, John Boston, Louis Jos. Papineau, Michael O'Sullivan, Walter Davidson, Hughes Heney, Alexis Bourret, Chas. Porteous, J. C. Grant, Dominique Benj. Rollin, F. W. Desrivieres, Samuel W. Monk, Paul Lussier, Toussaint Pelletier, Francois Roy, Alex. McMillan, Samuel Sherwood, J. McGill Desrivieres, G. S. Henshaw, P. N. Rossier, Jas. Hallowell, W. L. Mettcher, C. C. S. De Bleury, H. Blennerhassett, P. H. De Beaulieu, and Dominique Mondelet. It will be seen that the legal profession was not as overcrowded in those days as it is at present. Several of the lawyers in the above list became judges and sat on the Bench to within comparatively recent years; for example, judges Mondelet, Monk, Sewell and Gale.

There were only eighteen notaries in the city of Montreal at that time. It will be noticed several of the names of those old-time lawyers and notaries remain preserved in the nomenclature of our streets and squares. The notaries were:—J. Papineau, J. Gerbrand Beck, J. M. Mondelet, Thomas Barron (Barron Block); Chas. Prevost, Louis Guy, (Guy street); F. X. Dezery, (Dezery street); Louis H. Latour, (Latour street); N. B. Doucet, J. Marie Cadieux, (Cadieux street); Joseph Roi, (Roi street); Joseph Desautels; Thos. Bedouin, Henry Griffin, Andre Jobin, Pierre Gamelin, Paul Ed. D'Aveluy, Charles Deseve, and Pierre Leekin.

At that time Montreal had eleven physicians and two apothecaries. The physicians were:—Doctors George Selby, (Selby Avenue); John Rowland, F. X. Bender, J. B. Herigault, Henry Munro, Wm. D. Selby, D. T. Kennelly, Rene Kimbert, Wm. Caldwell, A. J. Christie, and Alexander Lussignan, (Lussignan street). The apothecaries were: Samuel Newcomb and Joseph Beckett.

The Trinity House—now Custom House—had the following officers:—John Delisle, Jr., Clerk of Wardens; Gabriel Franchere, Harbor Master; Claude Thibault, Water Bailiff; and Francis Desrivieres, T. A. Turner and Robert Armour, Wardens. James Williams was then Post-Master of Montreal. Mails for Quebec and post offices en route thereto were made up and forwarded every day, Sundays and Fridays excepted, at 4 p.m. Mails for Upper Canada were made up and forwarded every Tuesday and Saturday, at 4 p.m. Mails for the Eastern Townships were made up and forwarded every Monday at 4 p.m. Mails for post offices along the Ottawa river were made up and forwarded every Saturday, at 4 p.m. Mails for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were made up and forwarded every Wednesday, at 11 a.m. The duly appointed school master—under Act 41st, Geo. 3rd—for Montreal, was William G. Holmes. The Bank of Montreal had a capital of £250,000. The president was Samuel Gerrard; vice-president, George Gardin; directors:—Austin Cuvillier, David David, F. W. Ernatinger, John Gray, Horatio Gates, James Leslie, F. A. LaRoque, Thos. Porteous, James Millar, Thomas Thain, and Thomas Torrance; cashier Robert Griffin; 1st teller, Jas. Jackson; 2nd teller, Benj. Holmes; book-keeper, Hil. Dupuis; assistant book-keeper, Lawrence Castle; discount clerk, William Radenhurst; messenger, Mons. Blair; porter, Alex. Macneir.

POLITICS OF THE DAY.

(By An Occasional Contributor.)

By no matter what name you call that which is not in strict accordance with the laws of morality, it is the spirit in which it is done, or rather the spirit from which it arises. We are too prone, in this age, and especially in the peculiar condition of affairs that obtains in the world, to venerate that which is wrong with a coating of fine phrases and to swallow the pill regardless of the consequences. Everything seems to be for appearance's sake. The old job about the man who was not sorry for his crime, but sorry because it was found out, has more philosophy in it than we might suppose. As long as people can move through life undetected in their shortcomings they teach themselves to believe that they are immaculate. They know the dark spots on their inner lives, but they imagine that as long as the rest of the world does not also see them they are clear. While this is

the case in regard to moral lines, it is equally applicable in another and more general sphere. In public life to-day, there seems to exist a lack of conscience that is appalling.

They have given a new name to this method of aggrandizing oneself at the expense of the public. They call it "graft." Not long since it was given the more peculiar name of "boodle." What the origin of either of these words we do not know, nor do we much care. The name is of small significance compared to the thing that it is intended to represent. And what is that thing? In former days some would have bluntly called it robbery, or stealing. But that would not be parliamentary at present. If you told a man that he was a public robber he would sue you for criminal libel; but if you were to insinuate that he is a clever boodler, he would simply smile.

If ever the Mighty Dollar were truly the god of men, it is at this moment. In public life the rush is for money. Men claim to have principles, and they preach national rights and political purity. Yet the moment the spirit of the hour comes upon them they are ready to ding principles to the wind, provided that there is money for them in the other scale. We do not say that there are not exceptions; but they are rarely to the front. One man enters the field, shouting for a party and for the principles that it represents; but he sees in the distance his reward for his political services. And if, for a moment, that reward becomes eclipsed and he can no longer see it clearly before him, he forgets the principles and the party; he sees only himself and his disappointment, and he is out next day shouting for the principles of the opposite party. There are scores of such patriots in leading cities on this continent. It may be boodle or graft, or simply a situation, or cash, or whatever else you like to call it; but it is the sordid spirit, that knows the vitals of real principle, that is behind it and that actuates the actor.

Take the larger field of political life as a subject of study. No person will pretend that the great leaders of contending political parties are mere self-seekers. That would be unjust. No one is going to say that they would abandon their principles for money, or that they are after what pays the best—it would be untrue to make such a broad statement. There are, in all parties, sincere men, who have convictions that cannot be estimated by dollars and cents. But follow the leaders, the rank and file, and the press of both parties, and be it in the halls of legislation, or before the country, you find the same uncompromising blindness that necessarily leads to injustices and wrongs. It is absolutely impossible that aught human can be perfect; it is equally improbable that imperfection of an unqualified character should be attached to everything that a man or a party does. Yet you have never known the leader of one party to acknowledge that the leader of the other party was positively right; still it is scarcely possible that he could be invariably wrong in everything. You never knew the press of one party to have a word of unqualified commendation for aught that was done or said by those who belong to the other party. There must be times and occasions when every person is in the right. A man who is perpetually and under all circumstances wrong, could not reach any position of eminence. Yet read the party press on one side and you will find, according to it, that its opponents are always, in all things, in every detail, and under every circumstance in the wrong.

There is something out of gear in a political machinery of this character. The fault is that each one of a large class in public life to-day, is after his own little object, and he recognizes his own party to be the only instrument whereby he can hope to attain his end.

SALVATION OF SOULS.

Father Kelly, of Crafton, is stricken down with the smallpox, one of other priests in this diocese to be smitten while in the discharge of duty. We trust the good father will be spared to his beloved people. The priest accepts no easy place when he vows his life to God's Church. He becomes a soldier of the faith, and because he loves the fight in the salvation of souls.—Pittsburg Catholic.

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OR LEATHER FURN.

NEW IRISH BOOKS.

(By Myles J. Murphy.)

The visit of William Butler Yeats to this country has stimulated the growing interest in books on Irish subjects to a marked extent. From almost every publishing house comes an announcement of some new Irish book with a name more or less known to lovers of Celtic literature designating its author. Mr. Yeats's own works are of particular interest, not merely because he is at present in the lime-light on the literary stage, but because the reading public has begun to realize the fact that he is one of the greatest living masters of the English language and one of the foremost poets of the day. Mr. Yeats's great fame has not been achieved by mere flights of great genius. Great gifts have been showered on him, but he has not trusted to them to carry him up the steep of Panassus. He is a dogged, indomitable worker. Few poets, excepting, perhaps, Edward Fitzgerald, have ever revised, retouched and rewritten their works as he has. The unity of the whole is first considered, then its fluency. When the final revision of his work is ready for the press, it shows little of the original draft of the poem, except its spirit. Then there is an easy flow, as though the poet struck the rock and the water gushed forth. There are none of the signs of pain and toil which attend the directing of the stream through the narrow, crooked channels until it became the present broad and placid river.

"On Baile's Strand" is the latest of Mr. Yeats's books. Like most of his recent works, Irish mythology forms the basis of his poems. Mr. Yeats has done well to remain in this field, for none richer and less explored is to be found in the world. At the same time it is fortunate that Irish mythology, in attracting the attention of Mr. Yeats, laid hold of something which mythology had never found before—a great artist to absorb and interpret it.

American Expansion.

(By An Occasional Contributor.)

Possessed of their Monroe Doctrine the United States holds all the world at arms-length and leaves it to be understood that American soil is sacred. In conformity with that doctrine and with the spirit of the constitution, that is the glory and boast of the Republic, there should be no desire for or tendency in the direction of external conquest or acquisition of domain. Yet the Imperialistic spirit that has suddenly taken possession of the American nation, despite the warning voices of many of her best and most sane leaders, is infallibly going to prove the source of an ultimate downfall. History teaches the lesson, and in no case more significantly than in that of the Roman Empire. It would be difficult to express the situation in a more concise manner than did a student of the systems of national life and growth, who, a few days ago, spoke on the subject to a New York American correspondent. In his opinion "The United States could produce a race of physical, moral and intellectual giants, but I see the United States dominating the Pacific by force; I see her confronting Russia on the confines of Asia; I see all the elements of imperialism in her blood. She has not surrendered anything during her history except Cuba, and that little island she holds in the hollow of her hand. She gets all the benefit there is in the island and has none of the responsibility. I would prefer to see the United States dominating as a great moral power; I would prefer to see her giving the fullest, freest trade to Cuba; I would prefer to see her permitting and fos-

tering the Philippines in working out their own destiny. Your Magna Charta, the Declaration of Independence, demands this."

He was willing to concede, as we all are, that as yet no great political party in America has ventured to advocate direct imperialism, and many leading men condemn it. But the tendency is in that direction, and what is worse the actions of the American Government are of that character.

Being asked what evil in the United States stands most in need of an immediate remedy, he pointed at once to the Trusts. He declared that if they were not dealt with at once they would eventually strangle the nation. They promised to cheapen things for the masses; they promised to reduce prices by co-operation, but they are doing the reverse. They have increased the cost of every necessary of life, such as fuel and food. In closing his interview this economist made use of the following significant language:—

"A plutocratic tyranny is worse than feudalism. The trusts promised the people bread, but they have given them a stone. You need honest men who are also statesmen at the helm." Put men like Jefferson and Washington there. You need men on top who will cultivate the simple life."

What a lesson for a great nation to receive. It comes from the past, it is spoken by History, for the words of the economist are the fruit of study in the fields of the by-gone. And if the American Republic does not soon alter its course, it is steering directly for shoals upon which its "ship of State" will surely be wrecked. Let it return to the simple and honest principles of Washington, or take the consequences of its folly.