

# THE WEEK.

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## THE WEEK:

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IN the death of James Russell Lowell the people of the United States lose one who has long stood in the very front rank, if he was not, as many will not hesitate to regard him, *facile princeps* among the literary men of the great Republic. Poet, orator, humorist, satirist, sturdy reformer and emancipator, elegant essayist and polished man of letters, Mr. Lowell possessed a breadth and versatility of mind rarely met with in the same individual, and existing in a combination still more rare with sterling manliness and force of character. The very originality, both of conception and of style, which marks some of his poems—the "Biglow Papers," for example—renders comparison difficult and perhaps unprofitable. The nobility of sentiment which stamps both the earlier and the later series of those papers throughout would have secured them a lasting place in popular literature, even had not the keenness of their satire and the depth of their penetrative philosophy given them an enduring claim to preservation. Uncouth as the form in which they are embodied may now appear to the fastidious, one would not risk verily in prophesying that the day will come when posterity will acknowledge a debt of gratitude to their author for having embalmed in classical English literature the rich Yankee dialect of his day. In prose, and in his non-metric poetry, Lowell was a master of expression as well as a clear, earnest, and generally unprejudiced thinker. In his official capacity as United States Minister to England, he rendered valuable service to both the great branches of the Anglo-Saxon family. By his culture, urbanity and intellectual strength on the one hand, and his personal straightforwardness on the other, he earned for the young nation which he was proud to represent, a need of respect from the Mother Country, the effects of which have been visible in all the subsequent diplomatic intercourse of the two nations. Formed by nature and by education to appreciate whatever is worthy of admiration in the character and traditions of the British aristocracy, he nevertheless, by his opportune and masterly exposition of "Democracy," in his famous Birmingham address of 1854, reassured his fellow-countrymen in regard to his loyalty to American institutions, while it touched a responsive chord in the heart of the British nation. But this is

not the place in which to attempt a critical estimate of the literary or artistic merits of the departed. Suffice it for our purpose to speak a word of sincere admiration of his talents as poet and essayist, and of hearty appreciation of the innate nobility of the man. His ingrained love of justice was well attested during the last few years of his life, in his powerful advocacy of the law of international copyright, which he had at last the satisfaction of seeing placed upon the statute books of his country but a few months before his death. Probably the ruling trait in Lowell's lofty character was his uncompromising love of freedom—not simply that freedom from bodily servitude for which he so nobly fought on behalf of the Southern slaves, but that still more precious soul-freedom, which he regarded as the special gospel his own country had

To preach and practice before all the world—  
The freedom and divinity of man,  
The glorious claims of human brotherhood,  
Which to pay nobly, as a free man should,  
Gains the sole wealth that will not fly away—  
And the soul's fealty to none but God.

CANADIANS have long been accustomed to point a warning finger at the political corruption rampant in the United States and to thank God that their politics had never reached so low a level as those of their next-door neighbours. This source of consolation will henceforth, we fear, be denied us. We have, unhappily, had our attention so fully engrossed with the session's revelations at Ottawa that we have scarcely had time to watch the methods of our neighbours in their attempts at political purification. Had it been otherwise the events connected with the recent resignations by Messrs. Quay and Dudley, of their positions as Chairman and Treasurer, respectively, of the Republican National Committee, would have afforded interesting subjects of study. These men, it will be remembered, made themselves famous, or rather infamous, by the magnitude and boldness of their corrupt operations during the last Presidential campaign. There can be no doubt, we suppose, that but for what an unfriendly paper calls "the cold-blooded and methodical manner," in which Mr. Quay exacted enormous levies from protected manufacturers and Mr. Dudley organized repeating and bribery in Indiana, Mr. Cleveland instead of Mr. Harrison would now be occupying the White House. It is equally clear that the resignations of these two men were, in the language of a Republican paper, "a propitiatory sacrifice to a public sentiment within the party, which insists upon much higher standards of political purity than these gentlemen are supposed to represent." In plainer language it was made clear to the party leaders that if these notoriously corrupt managers were permitted to retain their places, thousands of the best men in the Republican party would declare for independence and betake themselves to the camp of the Mugwumps. It is satisfactory to know that the strength of the better element in the party was sufficient to compel these men to leave it. It is, at the same time, a curious and suggestive fact that the Republican Committee, in saying farewell to Messrs. Quay and Dudley, did not hesitate to laud both as patriots and party men of the first rank. They indeed heaped upon them every form of eulogy. The one lesson for the honest electors of the United States and of Canada, which stands out from the incident in clear relief, is this: The only hope of purity in a political party, as political parties now are, is in the Independents. By this term we do not mean men who have no political opinions, but the men who put purity and honour and righteousness first, and politics after; the men who, however strong their faith in the measures of their party, are firm in the belief that the wrong way to advance these measures is to entrust them to the keeping of unworthy men. There is some reason to believe that on both sides of the line the numbers of the honest Independents are steadily increasing, and that the next elections will show a far larger proportion than ever before of electors who will not, under any circumstances whatever, vote for a man whom they believe to be unprincipled and corrupt. These are the men who will reform our politics and save our country, if reform and salvation are to be had under the party system. May their tribe increase. There is need of them.

ONE of the most noteworthy episodes in the Parliamentary transactions of last week was the adoption by the Government of Sir Richard Cartwright's motion condemning the acceptance of testimonials or donations by any Minister of the Crown, or any member of his family, from any person or persons holding contracts or office under the Government. The rule is one which will commend itself to the sense of propriety of every one in whom that sense exists in the most moderate degree of development. The wonder, and we cannot refrain from adding the disgrace, is that it should have been deemed necessary that the Canadian Parliament should solemnly affirm such a principle. Had not history and experience taught the contrary one would have been glad to believe that such a rule could be left to be "elegantly understood," as the old grammarians used to say of a certain Latin construction. The affirmation of the principle gave some of the Opposition orators and newspapers an opportunity too good to be resisted to make some unkind historical allusions, but the Government wisely brooked the taunts and asked their followers to vote for Sir Richard's amendment.

IMPARTIAL observers of the proceedings at Ottawa cannot fail to have been struck with the contrast between the attitude of the Minister of Justice in the Committee on Privileges and Elections and that of other leading Ministers of the Crown in the Public Accounts Committee. Not only has Sir John Thompson's conduct throughout the Tarte investigation been scrupulously fair, but everyone has been impressed with his evidently honest desire that the whole truth should be brought out, no matter whom it might implicate. So much cannot, unfortunately, be said of the Ministers who represent the Government on the Public Accounts Committee. Though their zeal in uncovering wrong-doing had in no case greatly impressed the on-looker, their action in refusing to permit Mr. Lister to make use of the document which the Committee itself had ordered from Quebec was a genuine surprise, and has produced a painful impression. Putting the matter on no higher ground, to strain the constitutional rule, if it be such, was a grave error in tactics. The spectacle of five or six members of the Government rising to vote against the production of a paper in evidence, for no better reason than that the agreement in question might implicate a Minister, was one which could not fail to arouse suspicion in respect to that Minister. The plea that the precedent, if allowed, might be abused for "fishing" investigations is nugatory. The position of Mr. Lister, or any other member, who might push such an investigation, only to cover himself with confusion by making it clear that his allegations were baseless, would not be so enviable that many are likely to covet it. Hon. Mr. Chapleau, if conscious of rectitude, may well exclaim, "Save me from my friends!" Grant that the correct constitutional doctrine is that no enquiry involving the conduct of a Minister should be entered upon until a formal charge has been made in Parliament, and that when that has been done the investigation would have to be conducted by another committee. Every unprejudiced person must none the less have felt that in this case the plea was little better than a subterfuge. Surely the divinity that doth hedge in a Minister of the Crown in Canada is not so awful that an investigation of accounts must be stopped short the moment there is reason to suspect that the evidence about to be produced may leave a stain on his administration of his office. The present is not a time when the process of investigation should be stopped by technicalities. The question said to have been put by the one Conservative member of the committee who voted against ruling out the proffered evidence, "Do you not suppose that Sir John Thompson would have approved of my course?" is significant. As for Mr. Chapleau himself, the wonder grows that he did not at once entreat his colleagues to desist and declare himself not only willing but anxious to have every scrap of evidence in the possession of the committee produced. That strikes one as the course which most men, conscious of innocence, would have taken. It surely cannot be that the matter will be allowed to drop, leaving the reputation of the Minister under a dark shadow of suspicion. The responsibility should be thrown upon