

enter this port. If the impending catastrophe had not happily been discovered in time to avert the dreadful effects, a sad loss of life would have ensued. At the time specified the Allan steamship Sardinian was forcing her way through the Straits of Belle Isle at full speed, notwithstanding the fact that the mist was so intense that it was impossible to see outside a radius of ten feet. A strict watch was maintained to avert the liability of accidents by collision, &c. Suddenly a seaman in the fore-top paralyzed those within hearing with the cry 'breakers dead ahead, close under our bow.' With lightning celerity the engines were reversed, and when the enormous headway was checked, anchor was cast to await the lifting of the fog, which obscured their path. When the mist was dispelled, it was seen that the vessel had had a narrow escape from running ashore, for directly in advance, within a stone's throw, the rocky Nova Scotian shore appeared in all its forbidding grandeur. The vessel's course was then altered, and the balance of the trip was accomplished in safety."

That is the *Post's* report, and here are the facts as supplied to me by the Captain. The "Sardinian" did not enter the Straits of Belle Isle until the fog lifted. Instead of going through the fog at "full speed" she went "dead slow," and men were kept taking soundings all the time. "A strict watch was maintained," but there was no "seaman in the foretop." If there had been, how could he have seen the "breakers dead ahead, close under our bow," when "it was impossible to see outside a radius of ten feet," and he would be eighty feet behind the forward outlook? That seaman who was not in the foretop must be a remarkable being, for he beat the impossible by more than a hundred yards. The anchor was not cast, and the ship never sighted the shores of Nova Scotia. The simple prose of this thrilling romance being that the "Sardinian" was steamed through the fog at "dead slow," the Captain knew he was near the Straits and lay-to for ten hours; the fog lifted, and the Straits were seen just two miles ahead.

HARD WORK.

English papers report that the Princess Louise will return to England next spring, but the Marquis of Lorne will not accompany her. They say that the Marquis likes his post here very much, but finds the work far harder than he had anticipated. One would like to know what the Marquis anticipated, and what he now calls work. A good many speeches had to be written and read at first, and a report had to be sent to England of the change in our fiscal policy, but after that the work could hardly have been heavy—except that there may be other kinds of diplomatic labour not known to outsiders. It will be a pity, however, if we compel the Marquis to overtax his energies in our service, and the Prime Minister would do well to exercise some little care of our Governor-General.

REPORTING.

Let me commend the principles and practices of Mr. Forbes, the brilliant war correspondent of the English press, to the reporters and correspondents of our Canadian dailies. Writing in answer to Lord Chelmsford's petulant remarks about the inconvenience and worry he had experienced on account of the hostile criticisms of newspaper correspondents, Mr. Forbes said:—

"I have been a war correspondent for ten years, and I have never known a colleague permit party feelings and political bias to influence his judgment concerning matters purely military."

Again he says:—

"I try in vain to imagine a war correspondent submitting to such a bondage of degradation as the acceptance of instructions, or even of hints, to colour his writing and warp his judgment to a political pattern. Speaking for myself, I say with all solemnity, that rather than endure even the shadow of such degradation, I would shake the dust of such polluted journalism off my feet, and be content, if needful, as in the old days, to bump the saddle of a private dragoon."

That is the only manly and honourable stand a newspaper reporter or correspondent can take. His duty is to give a faithful account of what he may hear or see. But how far that is acted upon in Canada a glance at any two opposing papers will show. Reporters often lampoon speakers instead of reporting their speeches; they judge or misjudge, just as it may suit the party to which the paper belongs, and a sense of personal dignity seems to have been put outside the calling. It often happens that gentlemen transfer their services from one paper to another, and bespatter public men, of whom, and for whom they had only words of fulsome flattery a week or two before. It is a pity that the gentlemen of the press have so little *esprit de corps*. A union for the protection of honest reporting would effect some good, I think.

Here is a good story from *Truth*:—

"All the Jesuit papers in France are bristling just now with wonderful telegraphic accounts from Lourdes, relating miracles after miracles, apparently due to the admirable virtue of the holy waters in the grotto. Cripples have been seen walking, invalids casting off their crutches, blind men reading the *Figaro*. The following miracle, however, which took place on the road to the shrine, has not received from the same papers the attention to which it was entitled. A paralytic in an easy chair had been placed in the pilgrim train. At one of the railway stations there was a change of carriages, and it happened that the easy chair, with the paralytic in it, had just been put down on the line, when a train running from the opposite direction was suddenly seen bearing right down upon it. There was a general stampede, and a cry of terror; everybody thought the paralytic must be killed; when, to the intense astonishment of all witnesses, he was seen to rise from his arm-chair and walk off briskly, just in time to escape the train. The mere thought of the holy waters seems to have been sufficient to cure this pilgrim."

THE FRENCH AND CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT.

The Editor of *La Minerve* takes grave, but courteous exception to my statement last week that the French do not understand Constitutional Government, on account of which Constitutional Government is impossible in the Province of Quebec. I need not say that when I credited the French people with "every sense under heaven but common sense," that I meant just what we often say of our most brilliant geniuses. In common with most of my countrymen, I have profound admiration for the French talent, which breaks out and works in so many admirable ways. But I must still maintain that in the general run of Frenchmen there is such a mingling of the poetic and the logical that they have not even a conception of the hard, practical, common sense we English possess and use in our administrative affairs.

La Minerve kindly states to its constituency that M. Bray has only lately arrived in the country which accounts for the fact that he is not "*au courant de notre histoire*." The first part is true. I have only been here three years. *Peccavi*. My sin is growing less every day, however. But the second part is hardly correct, since I have taken much pains to acquaint myself with the history of this Dominion; and, although I do not pretend to be so well versed in it as the Editor of *La Minerve* must be, I yet claim to speak not altogether as a fool.

However, I am content to go back once more to my historical studies, under the competent leadership of my newly found mentor. "M. Bray ignore-t'il la cause de troubles de 1837-38?" No, I do not, nor do I ignore the fact that after the conquest of this country the French-Canadians claimed responsible government. But by "*le gouvernement responsable*" they seemed to mean that they were to remain a French nationality, preserving all their old customs, habitant ignorance, forms of Ecclesiastical life, and methods of civil government. It was precisely that which led to the "troubles of 1837-38." That chapter of Lower Canadian history, in which Papineau figured so conspicuously, cannot well be cited in proof that the French were in love with the British Constitutional form of government. They wanted "responsible government," but that is a phrase which may be made to include a good deal. Anything that is not an actual despotism, and is in any sense elective, or under the control of the popular will, might be called a responsible government. It is quite true that the French claimed responsible government; that is to say, Government by a Parliamentary majority, for it suited them well. There was no occasion for what I called "give and take,"—which by the way is hardly expressed by the *Minerve's* translation, "*un système de compensation*,"—for every fresh opportunity served the cause of "take." It is true, as the *Minerve* states, that Sir H. Lafontaine at one time resigned his portfolio because Lord Metcalfe put forward some unwarrantable claims, but that does not prove anything particular, except that Sir H. Lafontaine had a very strict and proper regard for his own and his people's rights. And I never charged our French fellow-countrymen with losing sight of those rights, any more than I would charge an Englishman with the same crime. The whole trouble was that they understood responsible government too well, and Constitutional Government not at all.

Not at all—that is, until it was forced upon them by the British inhabitants acting in conjunction with the Home Government. And if the editor of *La Minerve* will refresh his memory by a glance at the history of this Province, say from 1830 to 1837, he will find ample proof of my statement that Constitutional Government—the system of give and take—was not understood by the French. They used the English Constitution to defend themselves from being subject to an Anglicising process; they took the new tools, but did the old work with