

NOTICE.

Inventors, Engineers, Manufacturing Mechanics, or any other persons, intending to apply for patents, can obtain all requisite information, and have mechanical drawings made at the office of the Canadian Illustrated News.

OUR AGENTS:

J. W. ORR, THOMAS CROSBY, A. E. RICE, and JOSEPH FAULKNER, are our authorized Agents for the Canadian Illustrated News. When we appoint others their names will be announced.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

The public are cautioned against subscribing, or paying money to any one for the paper, unless the person soliciting subscriptions be named as an Agent, or have the written authority of the undersigned that he is properly authorized. And a further notice to Local Agents: the subscriber forbids any one of the Local Agents to pay any money due from them to the travelling agents unless such travelling agents have special authority to collect such moneys, as the proprietors will not be responsible to local agents for such payments, or recognise a travelling agent's receipt in such case.

FERGUSON & GREGORY.

Hamilton, July 1st, 1863.

Subscribers will please bear in mind that the paper is stopped, when the period for which they have subscribed expires.

Any person sending us the names of ten Subscribers for three, six, nine, or twelve months, will receive a copy free of charge, for each of these periods, respectively. Should those Subscribers, for any term less than a year renew their subscriptions, the paper will be continued to the get-up of the club.

The Canadian Illustrated News is forwarded to Subscribers by mail, free of postage.

THE CANADIAN Illustrated News.

HAMILTON, OCTOBER 17, 1863.

FERGUSON & GREGORY, Proprietors.

THE POLISH QUESTION—THE CLOSE OF DIPLOMATIC MEDIATION.

The curtain has just fallen upon the second act in the great and awfully tragic drama of the Polish struggle against Muscovite oppression. The first act may be said to have closed, and the second to have commenced, when the matter of the insurrection passed the bounds of a mere internal difference between the Emperor and a portion of his Polish subjects, and became *de facto* a European question, by the diplomatic interference of the Three Powers. Diplomatic remonstrance and advice, more especially when coming nearly in unison from three such powers as England, France, and Austria, is certainly one form of intervention, even though it be couched in polite language, and smoothed off with assurances of the most distinguished consideration. And if, as we conceive, the commencement of official outside interference may from its actual importance be justly held to mark the opening of the second act of the Polish tragedy, the bringing of diplomatic mediation to a decided pause, to a virtual termination, in fact, does not less distinctly indicate its close. On the theatre of the history of our own time we behold the breaking forth of an insurrection against Russian tyranny, designedly precipitated, and even through secret agency instigated and encouraged, by the Russian Government itself. Next, we see the revolt attain unexpectedly to such dimensions as to make the whole question not merely a Polish or Russian one, but of European interest, and the subject of grave official communication from foreign powers. We see it as a possible, nay even as a probable cause of a tremendous European war, if haply Russia should persist in cutting with the sword the knot which diplomacy makes essay to unravel. And the last spectacle before our eyes is that of Russia arbitrarily shutting the door in the face of diplomacy; and haughtily rejecting all further mediation or advice.

The impression on the mind from a first view of what has up to this time taken place, is undoubtedly that England has done all she is likely to do in the matter; and that whatever sympathy our people may entertain for the Polish cause, it cannot be stretched so far as to commit England to a war with Russia for the sake of Poland. The gravity of the situation is almost painfully felt in England, and individual statesmen, political parties, and influential organs of public opinion, alike seem to hang back from the responsibility of urging the nation into war. Nor is this backwardness much to be wondered at. For the war, if once entered upon, would be no holiday affair of a few weeks or months, but a tremendous and in all probability a protracted struggle. The chances are that it would be on a scale which would dwarf even the Crimean war by comparison. And it is not alone the mere magnitude of the contest in prospect which may well make our statesmen pause ere committing the nation thereto. The baffling complications, impossible for human foresight to predict, to which such a war might give rise, loom up before us all

the more fearfully by reason of that very indistinctness of form and outline which mocks our keenest vision of the future. Supposing the liberation of Poland, by the united force of England and France an accomplished fact, after what would be no doubt a bloody and exhausting struggle, would the amicable relations between ourselves and our 'brave allies' be in no danger of being sundered by the centrifugal force of opposing interests in Germany? Are all the aspirations of France for a frontier on the Rhine, and a controlling influence beyond it, dead and inoperative? If the opinion almost universally prevalent be the correct one, such is very far indeed from being the case. To unite with France for the purpose of liberating Poland, and of again humbling a power which we know to be antagonistic to our interests in Asia, is not without strong attractions for the British mind. But, imagine the war over, and a victorious French army resting itself after the struggle beyond the Rhine, are we so sure that it would go quietly home when its Russian work was done, just as we would think it ought to do? Might not Napoleon have in his calculations some Russian, Danish, Belgian, Dutch, or German piece of work for it to do, to which England could never in honour consent? The strong sense of a probability of something of this kind is what no doubt chiefly weighs upon the English mind, more than any fear of defeat at the hands of the Northern Colossus. For the result of a contest between Russia alone, on the one hand, and France and England united, on the other, will appeal to all Englishmen and Frenchmen a foregone conclusion, whatever other nations may think of the matter.

The first note struck by the English journals is one of regret that the efforts of diplomacy have been unavailing in favor of Poland, coupled with the conclusion, rather tacitly assumed than demonstratively contended for, that England really cannot afford to go to war for the sake of Poland. But the very newspaper articles which may be thus characterized, leave behind them a feeling as of listening to a piece of music abruptly stopped in the middle of a strain. The writers seem to have felt as if there were something more to be said, which they did not like to take the responsibility of saying. Apparently, they want to wait till they see whether the nation speaks out for war as necessary to vindicate England's position in the world, before they say anything very decided in the matter. And in spite of what caution so evidently enjoins, an irrepresible feeling, as if England would possibly have to do something after all, appears to crop out. The most ominous shakes of the head are ineffectual to do away with the conviction, deeply rooted in the national mind, that England cannot afford to forfeit her influence abroad, or appear as if cowed by the bullying of the Czar. The oft-repeated question, 'What has England to do with the affairs of the Continent?' is felt to be dictated more by shallow and ill-informed conceit than by sound practical wisdom. Let England allow her right to interfere in the affairs of the Continent virtually to lapse and become obsolete by non-usage, and who will answer for it that the Continent will not thereby be encouraged to assume more of an aggressive attitude than it has lately done, and to take to do with the affairs of England, perhaps in a war not very pleasant for us to contemplate? It would be delightful, no doubt, to live in perennial peace and quietness, meddling with nobody; at the same time giving everybody to understand that they must not meddle with us. But such national happiness as this is deferred till we get a little nearer to the millennium. In the present age of iron-clad ships and rifled cannon, of 300-pounder guns and of Greek fire, the thing is visionary and impracticable. It is felt, moreover, that for England to isolate herself from Continental sympathy is to run a tremendous future risk. The process has already been carried, it is feared, much further than it ought to have been; as witness Italy, Spain, and Mexico, now wholly in Napoleon's grasp, and virtually subservient to his policy. Suppose that England stands quietly by, while Poland, Belgium, Saxony, and the Rhenish Provinces, and even Denmark, perhaps, are added to the list, what then? Would not that be a French-Napoleonic-Continental system much more formidable, because more naturally coherent in itself, than anything that the First Napoleon was ever able to achieve? To have allies on the Continent, bound to her by ties of gratitude and interest, is not merely a hypothetical desideratum for England, but a potent necessity. Not only so, but these ties require constantly to be renewed from time to time, or they become worthless. The ties

formed by Salamanca and Vittoria, by Trafalgar and Waterloo, are all but worn out. England cannot live forever in Continental sympathy, on the memory of what she did two generations ago. The nephew of the man who was at war with Spain fifty years since, has more influence in Madrid now than we have, and all because England has allowed hers to rust out for want of use. It is easy enough to put the question, 'Can England afford to go to war for Poland?' looking for an answer in the negative almost as a matter of course. But it is not so easy to meet another question which forces itself upon our attention, the question, namely: 'Can England afford to let France and Russia settle the affairs of the Continent alone?' For to this complexion must it come very speedily, if England stands unconcernedly by, while Poland is either forever crushed by Russia, or emancipated by France without England's help. There is danger in intervention, and there is danger in non-intervention, but in all human probability the greatest danger of all lies in the further isolation of England from the sympathy of the Continent. That process has already been carried to an undesirable length. The great and present danger seems to be, that England should, through culpable indifference, become still more isolated, still more of an outsider in the European comity of nations.

Such are some of the considerations, now, no doubt, present in full force to the minds of English statesmen. It is impossible to over-estimate the gravity of the situation. Earl Russell, after saying in his recent speech at Blair Gowrie, that England could not go to war for Poland, is careful to conclude his remarks on the subject by a deliberate expression of opinion, to the effect that by the breaking of the treaty of Vienna, Russia had so forfeited her right to govern Poland. The eager endorsement of this sentiment by the French press is not to be disregarded. The two circumstances, which more than any others render a European war a probable result of the Polish insurrection, are: First, the known inclination of Napoleon to interfere everywhere, but especially on the Continent,—in which he is determined to assert his supremacy as Director-general of European affairs. Next—the momentous and most important fact, that the Polish cause commands the united sympathy of the whole Catholicism and the whole Republicanism of Europe. What two more potent elements can we imagine combining, as in this case happens, to bring all Western Europe into collision with Russia? Napoleon keeps his place by dexterously playing off the Church and the Republic against each other; but if he allows Poland to be crushed, he quarrels with both. For be it remembered, that the heavy hand of the Czar now bears down with tyrannical force, not less against the Catholic religion than against political liberty in Poland. The recent mandate of Mouravieff against the priests reads more like the blind despotic decree of a madman, and a Russian madman at that, than the rational dictation of conscious right and assured power. That Napoleon is almost irrepresibly driven towards a conflict with Russia by two powerful forces in society, which, though almost always antagonistic to each other in their specific aims, are yet on this single question firmly united, is a fact of immense significance; which will appear even more important on reflection than at first sight. And this fact it is mainly, which to all human appearance, renders war to the full as probable as the continuation of peace.

THE HAMILTON CITY DEBT BILL.

WE are sorry to have to chronicle the fact that the Bill for the settlement of the Hamilton City Debt has been thrown out by the Legislative Council of the province. It was admitted in the debate on the Bill, that the Quebec Savings Bank, holding £16,000 of the Hamilton bonds, was the only creditor that continued to oppose, by petition or otherwise, the passage of the Bill. Other petitioners there were, but we believe we are correct in stating that they had all expressed their willingness to withdraw their opposition, with the exception above noted. We must do the honorable gentlemen who spoke against the bill the justice to say that they made appeal in their arguments to public and provincial reasons of policy mainly. We can concede this without admitting thereby that they proved their case. But it is evident that without the peg to hang their cause upon, which the opposition of the Quebec Savings Bank afforded, they would have been decidedly at a loss for any feasible excuse to begin with.

To enter into the merits of the case is not our intention at present. The main fact to be observed is, that the opposition of one single institution, to which only £16,000 is