

TRUTH.

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WHAT TRUTH SAYS.

The letter of our Ottawa correspondent on page six of this issue, is particularly entertaining and racy. Our friend at the capital tells his story so naturally that we seem to see with his eyes and hear with his ears, the various scenes and incidents described. Don't fail to take in these weekly treats.

The proposition of the Quebec government to grant \$10,000 towards the rebuilding of Toronto University, is meeting with great opposition by the press of the province. The only notable exception is *L'Electeur*, Premier Mercier's own organ. Among the most violent opponents is *La Verite*, the Ultramontane organ, edited by Mr. Tardivel, who denounces the action of the government as a truckling attempt to conciliate and please the Protestant minority. Thus he writes: "By dint of hammering it into him that he has insulted and exasperated the Protestant minority the Conservative papers have succeeded in apparently persuading him that it is true. He looks like a man that wants to redeem himself at any price. He is applying himself to flatter our separated brethren with an ardour which all regret to see wasted in so futile a task. Because it is not in curving our spines obsequiously to *Messieurs les Anglais* that we shall win their respect or even their friendship. Give them justice and then stand resolutely before them—that is the way to cultivate them. Until now Mr. Mercier seemed to have understood this, and it was this also which constituted his strength in the house and before the country." Now assuming that Mr. Mercier's motive has been correctly interpreted by the worthy scribe, that the Premier has been actuated by no higher sentiment than a desire to turn the unfortunate circumstance to his own political advantage, it may be true that the proposed bill is a mistake, and that he is taking a fatal step. Mr. Tardivel is on the ground and ought to be in a position to know. It may indeed yet transpire that his generosity will cost him his political head. Time alone however, must be judge in the matter, and determine who is wiser, the Premier or the editor. But this is not the only objection offered, that the move is impolitic and inexpedient; nor is it the strongest if we are to suppose Mr. Tardivel paid any attention to the order of climax, for he has reserved for the chief place in his article the objection based on religious grounds. Affecting a feeling of utter astonishment at the government's action he observes: "To-day Mr. Mercier asks the House to vote \$10,000—for what? To aid the Protestant University of Toronto. It is incredible, but perfectly true. Yes, Mr. Mercier is going to ask us to take \$10,000 out of our chest to give it to a Toronto institution which can get all it wants in the rich Province of Ontario. If the question was to help the victims of any calamity in the sister province, such as fire, flood, or famine, we should not have a word to say, for the Christian gives alms to his needy neighbor without inquiring whether he is Catholic or

Protestant, Jew, Musselman, or infidel. But the question now is not to relieve the poor, but to help the reconstruction of a Protestant university which has asked us for nothing and will probably send us back our money." Surely this is a strange view of things. Is Mr. Tardivel so blinded by his prejudices as not to perceive that governments as such, in free countries can have no sectarian preference. As individuals constituting the government they may have their religious convictions, which will no doubt affect their judgment as the various questions submitted to them from time to time come up for consideration, but as a body of men chosen to manage the affairs of state they are expected and bound to know not man as Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Musselman, infidel or Hindu. It will therefore be news to many to learn that the government of Quebec is a Catholic government, though it be composed chiefly of men who embrace the Catholic religion. The fact is, the question of religious belief is not in any sense germane to the government's action and has evidently been dragged in to accomplish by an appeal to the passions what could not have been done by a reference to reason.

The situation seems simple enough if one will not allow one's passions to blur one's judgment. In a sister province the chief seat of learning, confessedly secular, and teaching no distinctively sectarian tenets, has met with a serious calamity which has disposed the authorities to accept such contributions as their friends may be disposed to make. Under the influence of the feeling of solidarity which exists, or at any rate is supposed to exist, among the various members of a great confederacy, Quebec proposes to help her unfortunate neighbor. Nor yet alone is she moved by the feeling that in a confederation, no province lives to itself, but also by the further consideration, that in the day of her calamity Ontario did not fail to reach out a helping hand. He must have a very restricted and cramped view of things who can find in this neighborly, or, rather sisterly, act anything to question or condemn. If we are a Dominion, united by laws and covenants mutually imposed; if Canada is one nation in very deed and not a paper union, a mere rope of sand, then to urge the objection of Mr. Tardivel is to offend not only against the first principles of a confederation, but also against the universally accepted view in regard to governments claiming to be free. It is a singularly unfortunate that Mr. Tardivel should have expressed himself thus. No longer is he in a position consistently to taunt the extremists of the Province of Ontario with stirring up religious strife, and seeking to create a war of creeds. Henceforth he must share the blame for any evil that may come to the nation through this cause. The outlook for the country would be dark in deed, if *La Verite* on the one hand, and the Equal Righters on the other, gave a correct expression of the popular feeling throughout the Dominion.

Remarkable conversions are not confined solely to the religious sphere, though wonderful instances are here recorded, but are to be found in the field of politics as well.

Such a spectacle is just now presented by the House of Representatives at Washington. When the Republicans were in the minority they were uncompromising advocates and defenders of certain principles and usages which they held as essential to the stability and safety of the nation. Among these cherished principles were: (a) The right of the minority, in case they held any proposed acts of the majority to be unjust, unconstitutional or prejudicial to the public welfare, to imperatively call the attention of the country to these acts and to hold the majority to a voting responsibility for the same, (b) The right of the House itself to determine when any dragging debate shall be shut off, instead of leaving it with the Speaker to decide. But the last election having changed their relation to the Treasury benches and brought them out of the cold shades of opposition, they astonish the world by repudiating the doctrines they once so stoutly upheld. Of course, it is conceivable that they have discovered their former error and are forsaking their evil ways, though most men will suspect their former sincerity and will account for the change by referring to the old adage "It makes all the difference whose ox is gored." With such glaring instances of insincerity and inconsistency occurring from time to time, it is not surprising that many honorable citizens are becoming disgusted with politics as at present managed and are condemning them as a sink of selfishness, dishonesty, and corruption into which no pure and upright man can go without suffering defilement.

The divinity which hedges in those who are entitled to write "lord" before their name is growing beautifully less in the public estimation. Only the other day a member of Parliament had the audacity to call in question Lord Salisbury's ability to tell the truth, and now the Hon. Mr. Gladstone gives notice of the following motion: "The House deems it necessary to declare that when a member prefers a charge against the Minister which the Minister denies, such member ought not to be restrained from refusing to accept the denial and from persisting in the charge because the Minister is a member of the House of Lords." No doubt this motion will be regarded as an unpardonable offence by those who boast of their superior blood, but the leveling process is at work and the inevitable is drawing near. The day hastens when character, and not the accidents of noble birth or wealth, will be the standard by which men will be judged, and the weight in the balance by which they will be tried.

It is just possible that Major Serpa Pinto the impetuous young officer who precipitated the east African trouble, may yet in his government in greater things. Fearing that his presence at the summit of the flame the patriots who have been embittered the mind of the land and voted for the bill at present.

the debates in the Cortes on the situation in Africa and his treatment of the natives. In an interview at Durban Serpa Pinto blamed the Protestant missionaries and the agents of the African Company as the prime movers in the quarrel between Portuguese and the natives. He asserted that the Portuguese massacred the natives only when they were compelled to do so in self-defence. There is a considerable party in Lisbon who will support him in whatever story he chooses to tell, and there may be trouble on his arrival.

The developments in connection with the proposed World's Fair in Chicago are not very assuring, and create a doubt whether the monster exhibition will materialize at all. It would seem that the money necessary for carrying out the project successfully has not been raised by the winning candidate, the so-called guarantee fund amounting almost to nothing. In view of this fact it is now proposed that Congress shall devote \$10,000,000 or \$15,000,000 of the surplus for this purpose. Quite naturally New York, which had practically raised \$15,000,000, all of which would have been available in a very short time, objects to such a proposal. Says the *Saturday Globe*: "If this argument shall find adoption in Congress, it will be little less than disgraceful. If, after months of lobbying, if, after having made representations of the most positive character, Chicago is not able to raise the money and carry on the Fair out of its own resources, it had better be left alone to hold simply a State or inter-State Fair, in which the rest of the country will have only the slightest interest." The *Sun*, with greater warmth and in terms decidedly vigorous, reminds the legislators of a day of reckoning. "If," it says, "you make a grant of money to Chicago for the purpose of holding the proposed Fair, that fact will become a very important issue in future elections; and the Republican party will be held to a responsibility which no set of politicians will find any reason to rejoice in. Give to Chicago for this purpose just what New York would have asked for, namely, the limited sum which may be necessary for a Government exhibit; make to Chicago, if you think proper and find the security satisfactory, such a loan as was made to Philadelphia in 1876; but beyond this not one cent under penalty of hearing from it very decidedly and impressively in the course of 1892. It will be a pity if the jealousy of the greater city should place any obstruction in the way of carrying out this enterprise, which, while it is a national benefit, can have no over-estimated value."