

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

## The Franchise Bill—Mr. Curran's Speech.

The following is the *Hanover* report of the speech of Mr. Curran, M.P., on the Franchise Bill on Monday evening, the 27th April:

Mr. Speaker, I desire to say a few words on the subject now before this House; first, because of its importance; and, secondly, because I know that, as a result of the deep strategic movements on the other side of the House, we are likely to spend the whole night here, and it may be just as well that members on both sides should express their opinion on this matter. The fact is, the observations of the speakers in the course of this debate on the other side of the House lead us to believe that whilst they may have come to a perfect understanding as to the movements they are to adopt, they are not at all in accord as to the arguments they are to employ. Now, the hon. member for West Elgin (Mr. Casey), after a great number of attempts to give some expression to some idea or other, stated that it was not statecraft to make this an open question, entirely apart from the political question, that divide the House and this country, that divide very much for his sake that he should have so very violently come into collision with the opinions of his own leader in the opening speech that he made upon this very important Electoral Franchise Bill. The hon. leader of the opposition furnished us with a statement made by the hon. Mr. Gladstone to this effect:

"My own opinions," says Mr. Gladstone, "upon this question, if I can describe them in rude outline, are that it is a question of immense difficulty, a question upon which nothing hasty is to be done, a question which requires absolutely to be sifted to the bottom, a question which should be completely dissociated from every movement of party, and every important political consideration, and upon which the House of Commons can only, by a strict adherence to these rules, arrive at a satisfactory conclusion."

Now, we have furnished us by the leader of the Opposition the justification of the course that has been adopted by the right hon. leader of this Government. (Cheers.) He has left this an open question: it is one of great difficulty; it is one that requires to be sifted; it is one that must be dissociated from party politics; therefore, the right hon. leader of this Government leaves it an open question for the consideration of members of both sides of the House. (Hear, hear.) I think that is about all the hon. gentleman contrived to say during the three quarters of an hour that he spoke, with the exception of arguing one point, on which I agree with him. He stated that the hon. member for South Grey (Mr. Lenderkin) and others who had urged in this House that it was ridiculous to offer the franchise to unmarried ladies and widows, was a proposition that could not be maintained. I do not think that it can. In fact, those who argue on this question in favor of the married woman suffrage remind me very much of the two American politicians who are said to have been discussing very warmly some theological question, whereupon one of them came angry with the other and said that he knew nothing at all about the subject, and that he did not even know the Lord's Prayer. His adversary wagged that he could repeat it, and he proceeded as follows:—

"Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep."

(Laughter.) "Stop," cried the other, "that will do. You are the first man I ever heard that could recite the Lord's Prayer off hand." (Laughter and cheers.) Now the theology of hon. gentlemen opposite is just about as deep as the theology of those two American politicians. If either of the hon. gentlemen opposite had taken up, for instance, the child's catechism in the Catholic church, he would have found that one of the first duties of the wife is to obey. If he had taken up the prayer book of the English church at the marriage ceremonies, he would have found, after the question "Will thou have this man?" etc., the promise to love, honor and obey, etc. (Cheers.) Therefore, we have, both in the Protestant and Catholic books that are supposed to be in the hands of everyone in this House and in this country, the doctrine that it is the wife's place to obey; and consequently, we can hardly understand how she is going to obey when she marches to the poll and votes in an opposite direction to her husband; but on the other hand, if she were to obey him, by voting for his candidate, we would be giving two votes to the husband instead of one. Now, the hon. member for West Ontario (Mr. Edgar) has also favored the House with an exhibition of his skill. He has repeated the arguments pro and con, and stated that he had not been able to make up his mind as yet, but he would make it up before the end of the debate. I trust that he has a mind to make up. (Hear, hear.) But his speech reminded me very forcibly of the course that has been adopted by that great organ of the Liberal party in this country, the *Toronto Globe*. When this bill first came before the country some two years and a-half ago, the *Globe*, with which some people intimate that the hon. gentleman connected, had an article upon the subject of this Franchise Bill. That journal opened the campaign by an attack upon the general principles of the bill, but on the 16th April, 1883, it stated:—

"It will be noticed that the conferring of the franchise upon unmarried women is the only liberal feature in the Bill. As to that feature of it, we are pleased to say it is a truly liberal measure."

That was the argument of the *Globe* on 16th April, 1883. As regards this particular clause of the bill, as regards the principle enunciated in it, there is not one iota of difference between that clause to-day and what it was the first time it was introduced into this House. But last week the same *Toronto Globe* in another leading article, said:

"It is highly probable that the clauses which would extend the franchise to women were put in by Sir John as a cheap means of earning popularity in some quarters, and that he never had any idea of getting them passed into law. His bill, as introduced, would give votes to young, inexperienced women, and withhold the suffrage from all married women, thus branding the married state as disgraceful, or at least as a condition of inferiority."

This is the comment upon the very clause which, two years and a-half ago, this very same journal eulogised as being a truly liberal measure. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) The question of female franchise has been so ably discussed, the arguments pro and con have been so fully presented, that I think it would be very inexpedient to introduce further remarks upon the House. I will merely say that in so far as I am concerned I have given this subject a great deal of consideration since it was first introduced by the leader of the Government, in the first session of this Parliament. Certainly, if we take purely abstract reasoning alone, there is nothing, I believe, that can be

urged against the exercise of the franchise by widows and unmarried ladies who are taxed to bear the burdens of the affairs of State, and who ought, in that sense, to seem to me, to be allowed, if they so wish, to give their views at the polls. In fact, when I take my own constituency into consideration, when I consider that in that constituency there are very many widows and unmarried ladies who depend upon real estate, in many instances composed of small tenements, for the revenues which are to support them; and when we consider that during the reign of the ex-Finance Minister (Sir Richard Cartwright), those unfortunate ladies were deprived of their incomes, by their houses being vacant through his fiscal policy, that they suffered greatly from the effects of that policy—I think it is, perhaps, to some extent, a hardship, that those ladies should be deprived of recording their votes, as they certainly would record them, against the hon. gentleman's return to power during the period of their natural lives, or of the lives of any of those who will remember the disastrous effects of that policy. (Loud cheers.)

But there is more than that point to be considered. We have to take into consideration, after all, what is the sentiment of the people amongst whom we live, what are the views of the ladies themselves. (Hear, hear.) My idea is that it would not elevate the ladies to have them interfere in election matters. My view is, that the ladies themselves have no desire to participate in election contests or in proceedings at the poll. I am satisfied that if you look through the annals of this country, in no place will you find that ladies for whom we have very great reverence have ever urged their claims to vote. This is, therefore, one of those questions on which I think the greatest care should be taken not to thrust a responsibility upon the ladies which they do not ask and seek; and in view of these considerations, certainly shall record my vote against this clause of the bill, which would give the franchise to the ladies. (Cheers.) As for all the rest, as I do not intend to speak again on this bill, and I will simply say there is something in this measure of which the right hon. leader of the government has a right to feel proud. We have not what is commonly called manhood suffrage, but we have true manhood suffrage in this bill. Every man who proves himself in any way a useful citizen is given the right to vote. We have a recognition not merely of the rights of capital, of property, and of great investors, but we have labor placed upon a par with capital. (Loud cheers.) This bill is so framed that the tenant, the mechanic, the laborer, every class of our society, have a right to give utterance at the polls to the views they entertain, and in view of this fact I feel that the right hon. leader of the Government has done well to bring this measure forward at the present session. I do not intend to urge the very many reasons which justify the Government in thus placing the crowning stone, as it were, on the edifice of our Confederation, in thus affording an opportunity for the Local and Federal Governments to work independently of each other, without being obstructed by any political combinations or temporary exigencies (cheers). I believe that throughout the length and breadth of the country there is a feeling of satisfaction with the general principles and details of the measure, which now has been before the country for two years and a-half, and which has not evoked that hostility which hon. gentlemen opposite state it does evoke in the minds of the people at large. They have said that this measure is unpopular. If so, why have they not adopted the means they know so well to establish that? Whether it be as regards female suffrage or any other part of the bill, whether it be with respect to those ladies to whom it is now sought to give the franchise, they knew very well how to call public meetings to denounce the measure, but they have not dared to do it. (Cheers.) They are calling meetings now in one section of the Dominion, the purpose of which we know very well the great leaders of the party will be the first to disavow, but which I am satisfied they will be particularly careful to take the full benefit of when the proper time and the opportunity present themselves. (Loud cheers.)

## COL. QUIMET'S TROUBLES.

Col. Quimet has followed up his legal procedure against the *Times* of this city by taking an action for damages against E. E. Sheppard, the nominal head of the *News*, a paper published in Toronto. This paper published an article in which serious assertions were made concerning Col. Quimet as to justify an action for libel against the *Times*, which merely reprinted it. The damages are laid at \$50,000. The *News* is one of the Roridian ventures, and was at one time a species of evening edition of the *Mail*. How far Mr. Sheppard will be found responsible in the matter is doubtful, but a legal gentleman connected with the matter stated that the action may be brought on the ownership of the *News* and the relations it bears to the *Mail* proprietors in rather a strong light.

## ANOTHER TRUNK MYSTERY.

PITTSBURGH, May 1.—A trunk from which an unbearable stench emanated was burst open at the Union depot this evening, and found to contain the body of a man about thirty years of age in an advanced stage of decomposition. The face was badly discolored and bloated. The trunk was a common one, and evidently had not been used before. It arrived from Chicago this morning, but no person called to claim it. The baggage master noticed a peculiar smell when he was unloading it, but no attention was paid until this evening. The body had been bent almost double and forced into the trunk. A hemp cord was drawn so tightly around the neck, arms and legs that it cut deeply into the flesh. There were no marks of violence on the body, and there was nothing to furnish a clue to its identity except an international money order in favor of Filippo Larvo for \$25, drawn at Chicago February 21th. The body was that of a short, heavily built man with smooth face, and had evidently been in the trunk thirty-six hours.

## A SECRET AGENT TO ROME.

ROME, April 29.—The English Government has sent a secret agent to sound the Vatican as to the Pope's willingness to give the Prince of Wales an audience. The Prince would have a double object in coming here: First, to arrive at an understanding with the Vatican in regard to the Irish bishops; second, to persuade Italy to form an alliance with England.

A theological discussion about eggs is thus told by a religious paper of Richmond, Va.: "Ought we to let our hens lay on Sunday?" "Ought we to let our hens lay on Sunday?" a sister asked me, and I said: "Yes, but you ought to give the Sunday eggs to missions," and she did it.

FEVER, colic, unnatural appetite, fretfulness, weakness, and convulsions, are some of the effects of Worms in Children; destroy the worms with Dr. Low's Worm Syrup.

## [For THE POST and TRUE WITNESS.]

## THE CAPTURED FLAG.

Only the stars of the cheerless walls,  
Only the stifled cry of pain,  
Only the scanty light that falls  
Upon the hospital narrow pane.  
No one to smother the death-dreaded hair,  
Or touch the brow with a gentle hand;  
Friendless and dying—but, Oh! so fair,  
The soldier lay in a sunny land.

Amid the pain-drawn lips would smile  
As happy scenes would come again,  
Or bygone triumphs rest a while,  
Like sunlight on the clouded brain;  
Now 'twas the heat of the deadly charge,  
Where hand and courage must not lag—  
The Northern colors float at large—  
A wild hurrah—the captured flag.

Poor lad! 'twas bravely won, they said,  
The Northern ensign bit the dust,  
And Federal steel his bosom bled,  
As grape-shot on our columns burst.  
His native place a veteran asked—  
"Beside the Lily's restless wave,"  
And, as the memory sadly passed,  
A sigh of pain the soldier gave.

And now by darker visions lit  
The failing cause—the dire defeat—  
Columbia's burning homesteads lit  
By bloody frays and quick retreat.  
And as the smoldering fainter grew,  
The lengthening shadows slowly drag  
Aghast a soul that dimmer glows—  
The hero of the captured flag.

Outside "Libby Prison" walls  
The Summer smiled with languid grace;  
Inside, struggling sunlight falls  
With pity on each anguished face.  
Peaceful the dead Confederate's brow,  
The star of Erin softly shines,  
When captured flags her sons endow  
Beneath the croon of Southern pines.

GRACE O'BOYLE, Ottawa.

## THE AFGHAN CRISIS.

## GLADSTONE'S SPEECH ON THE MOTION FOR THE VOTE OF CREDIT.

## He Denies England's Position Very Clearly—She will Maintain Her Engagements and Preserve Her Honor.

LONDON, April 28.—The House of Commons on Monday evening, at Mr. Gladstone's request, rejected, by a vote of 229 to 186, the motion made by the opposition to separate the vote of credit. This motion called for a division of the vote for expenses of the Sudan enterprise, and another for special preparations account. The object of this motion was to secure a debate on the government's Sudan policy, by questioning the authority of that part of the credit, which would by its division have been applicable to the expenses of the Khartoum expedition. The house then went into committee of supply, and the vote of credit as a whole being up, Mr. Gladstone explained the government's object in asking for it. He disposed of any probable discussion of the Sudan question by a short and powerful argument. In this he urged that it was now the paramount duty of the government "to hold the British forces in the Sudan available for service wherever the call of duty and honor may take them in the service of the British Empire." The utterance was received with cheers. Mr. Gladstone continued as follows:—"I now come to the subject of the preparations with regard to which I have heard with great satisfaction assurances of honorable gentlemen opposed to the government that they are disposed to forward in every way the grant of funds to us (cheers from opposition benches), which to the best of our mind and judgment are required for the maintenance of what I on a former occasion described as 'national and imperial policy.' (Cheers.) A national and imperial policy is one which would by its division have been applicable to the expenses of the Khartoum expedition. 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