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TEMPERATURE

as observed by Hearn & Harrison, Thermometer and Barometer Makers, Notre Dame Street, Montreal.

THE WEEK ENDING

	Feb. 18th, 1883.			Corresponding week, 1882.		
	Max.	Min.	Mean.	Max.	Min.	Mean.
Mon.	24°	14°	19°	38°	16°	27°
Tues.	30°	14°	22°	42°	24°	33°
Wed.	28°	16°	22°	40°	33°	35°5
Thur.	19°	5°	12°	46°	29°	37°5
Fri.	37°	25°	32°	47°	32°	[illegible]
Sat.	40°	28°	[illegible]	34°	22°	28°
Sun.	37°	11°	24°	22°	-5°	[illegible]

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CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, Feb. 24, 1883.

GOSSIP OF THE WEEK.

OF course the salaries of these county officers in Philadelphia—Recorder, Register, Clerk, District Attorney, etc.,—though they still seem high when compared with those paid to the judges, were lowered very much from the sums they received under the old fee system, and the descent made was so great that it is not strange a stricter and more reasonable proportion was not at once obtained. It was the old idea that an incumbency of one term in some of these places was a great financial prize, laying the foundation of a fortune at the very least, and when the salary system was established it attacked this usage with a heavy hand, if it did not actually cut it up by the roots. But the time has now come when there should be a general, systematic and just reapportionment of salaries. Those paid the judges are small; those paid some of the other officials are too high. If a judge of the Orphans' Court is to have but five thousand dollars a year, it is absurd and unfair to give the Register of Wills ten thousand. Probably seventy-five hundred dollars each would be nearer the mark of justice.

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WE must all look forward with deep interest to the new ocean wonder which is promised the world in July next, namely, the fastest ship that has ever been afloat on the bosom of the seas. The steamer is to be called the *Oregon*, so a look-out may be kept for her performance number one. She is intended for the Guion Line. She will not be much larger than the *Alaska*, but her engines are to indicate no less than 13,000 horse power. She will have but one screw, as we understand, about 24ft. in diameter, with a pitch of nearly 40. Steam will be supplied by twelve boilers, each with six furnaces 3ft. 6in. diameter, the grates being a little over 6ft. long. We may compare her with the *Alaska*, which ship has nine boilers with six furnaces in each, of about the same size. Comparing great areas, we find that the aggregate surface in the *Oregon* will be 1,512 feet, divided among 72 furnaces, while that of the *Alaska* is 1,134, divided among 54 furnaces. We shall not, we have reason to believe, be far wrong if we assert that such vessels as the *Alaska*, *Servia*, *Gallia*, &c., earn each voyage from £13,000 to £20,000, nearly one-half of which is profit.

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IT seems highly probable that there will be some inquiry into the subject of the duties and compensations of public officials in the large cities of the United States. The relative amount and character of the service performed, and the amount of salary or fees received for it, afford a very curious study. In some cases the pay is enormous, in others absurdly inadequate. Thus, the "Recorder" of Philadelphia, who is really an assessor and collector of mercantile license taxes, receives a net compensation estimated at from twenty-five to thirty-five thousand dollars, while the Mayor of the city gets five thousand. The City Treasurer is reported to have fees reaching twenty thousand dollars, while the Treasurer of the State is allowed five thousand only, and cannot lawfully increase this sum a cent. In New York, it is asserted that the County Clerk gets one hundred thousand dollars a year from his office, and the Registrar seventy-five thousand. The figures for these offices are not correspondingly high in Philadelphia, because under the new Constitution salaries were substituted for fees; yet the Registrar here receives ten thousand dollars a year, while the Orphans' Court judges, to whose court he is clerk, receive five thousand. The other judges (in the Court of Common Pleas, etc.,) get seven thousand dollars; but, at the same time, the Prothonotary gets ten thousand dollars and the Clerk of the Court of Quarter Sessions ten thousand, while the Recorder of Deeds has twelve thousand dollars and the District Attorney fifteen thousand.

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A GENTLEMAN, who calls himself "A Victim," writes to the English papers complaining of the way people behave who come to hunt meets, and it is a matter that must have struck many an observant person. "All is so different now," exclaims "A Victim." "In old days, thirty or thirty-five years ago, even one's own friends were in the habit of writing and asking permission to drive over to see the Meet. In these days the general public come *nolens volens*. I don't know if I altogether object to the liberty they take, but I certainly object to them turning the place into a bear garden, by driving across the grass and cutting the hedges of the roads, so that one has to send a man for several days to repair damage. But it is rather too much of a good thing when these attendants of the Meet nearly drive over you, and give you their 'blessing!' because you happen, on your own bank, to be standing in their route. The thing has become a positive nuisance, and I am determined not to stand it." There is nothing like a strong determination to alter the whole tone of society and have things as they were in the good old times, but it is a little different to carry out the determination.

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THE manufacture of the *tanagra* has been unusually brisk this year at Marseilles. These *tanagra*, for the fabrication of which, at Christmas time, the blacksmith leaves his anvil, the shepherd leaves his flock, and the weaver his loom, are produced exclusively at Marseilles, and serve to ornament the cradle of the infant Jesus in every Catholic church throughout the whole of Europe. They are made from the models found in the ancient Greek tombs, and many an antiquary has been deceived by the close imitation of the workmanship of the figures to give a fabulous sum for one of these *tanagra*, in the belief that it is the relic of the Pagan veneration for the dead, found in the sepulchres of ancient Greece. Now, it appears from the report of a visitor to Marseilles last month, in quest of the models thus employed, that many of them have been in reality taken from the tombs, and have been transmitted from father to son through many generations, being preserved most jealously in the same family until the present day. What is most curious of all is the discovery that none of these figures have ever been baked in the oven, as is generally supposed, and this mistake has often caused the fraud to be discovered, as the peculiar softness to the touch, peculiar to the genuine *tanagra*, is wanting in the imitation. It is supposed that the Marseilles pottery must be identically the same as that of the ancient Greeks brought by the Phœnicians. The mould is divided in half, each half is filled with wet clay, the mould is then closed, and held tightly together with *barbotine*. The figure comes out perfect, and is left to dry without further care. It is sometimes sold for a few pence, to be sold again in Paris or London for fifty or a hundred guineas, the whole beauty of the statuette consisting in the exquisite grace of the ancient Greek model. Attention has been drawn to this neglected branch of art by the publication of an exquisite poem by Godfried Kinkel, entitled, *Tanagra, a Greek Idyll*, which tells of a young Athenian modeller, who passes his whole life in seeking to reproduce in his *Tanagra* the form and features of the woman he loves, and succeeds at last, but dies; and the *Tanagra* is placed in his own tomb.

AMERICAN CONSERVATISM.

Edmund Burke once said: "He feels no ennobling principle in his own heart who wishes to level all the artificial institutions which have been adopted for giving a body to opinion and permanence to fugitive esteem. It is a sour, malignant and envious disposition, without taste for the reality or for any image or representation of virtue, that sees with joy the unmerited fall of what has long flourished in splendor and honor." Democracies have been accused of entertaining this envious, sour disposition, an accusation seemingly justified by the iconoclasm of the French in their domestic revolutions, and of the Paris Communists in the Franco-Prussian War. So, too, one may ask what "artificial institutions for giving a body to opinion and permanence to fugitive esteem" can exist in a country so new as the United States of America. Nevertheless, it has been reserved for a land theoretically the freest on the earth, and with a national and with provincial institutions expressly framed to facilitate revolutions in the State correspondent with fluctuations in opinion, to present an example of conservatism scarcely matched beyond the ancient empires of Asia. It is true that there is much flippant or noisy disdain of old fogyism, and wearisome chatter about progress, in many American communities. These are the favorite topics of declamatory politicians, who thus hope to please their constituents. But these are a short-lived race of statesmen, and the uninfluential cant about progress is an evidence of the conservatism which it denounces.

Possibly, American conservatism would sound like a paradox to those foreign reviewers who call this country "the asylum of exploded European fanaticisms," as was recently done in England, and also to those who accept "Martin Chuzzlewit" as an authentic description of American manners. But these are things which lie below the plane of intelligent and educated thought.

Since the Civil War attracted general attention to a country whose resources proved gigantic, and whose invention, skill and organization were displayed in the creation of disciplined armies, vast commissariat, transportation and charitable bureaux out of the raw material, foreign criticism has awakened a home sense of national character. In nothing have our friendly critics been more surprised than in American habits of conservatism, and, perhaps, no national quality was less suspected by ourselves.

Conservatism has usually been considered an attribute of well-defined and influential social circles. The old country families of England are almost wholly Tories, and conservatism is with them a household tradition. There was a like feature at the South before the war. In such families there are heirlooms, quiet ancestral customs, an unobstrusive *esprit*, which the stranger feels, though he can scarcely say wherein they lie. Members of the household pride themselves upon the preservation of these domestic and local ways. They are signs of self-respect,—of things which have flourished in honor. There is much of this element in America. It is found amongst the descendants of the early Quakers in Philadelphia, of the Dutch in New York and Albany, of the Puritans in Boston and Hartford, of the French in St. Louis. He who imagines that the society of American towns is alike all over the country, has not strayed far from home, or is very unobserving, or has not seen their best people. The stranger will find everywhere quiet circles of unassuming gentlefolk, all in possession of like cultivation, of like accomplishments, of the same topics of interest. But he perceives, as he goes from place to place, that the social atmosphere changes. While culture makes such a common possession, it heightens local and family distinctions. Of these America is full, and those who go into new districts, which are filling up by immigration from all parts of the world, find the new settlers carrying with them their ancestral sentiments and customs.

More marked than social peculiarities is the speech of America. Although dialects fade away in remarkable contrast to anything European, from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Baltic, yet the common tongue of America is more archaic and idiomatic than that of England. Our English is nearer that of the time of King James's version of the Bible than that of the educated British. The language has been more stationary here than in its native place. A Boston gentlemen, once taken to task on board a steamer by an English fellow-traveler for applying the word "sick" to another malady than nausea, replied with a quotation from the New Testament: "Peter's wife's mother lay sick of a fever." The conversation of educated Englishmen exhibits a tendency to obliterate all secondary accents and to carry the primary as far back as possible. But, when they come to recite the older poets, they are obliged to replace their secondary accents. The speech of America is that of the poets.

Recently, Dr. Bevan, a Welsh gentleman who was called from London to a church in New York, gave, as a reason for relinquishing his charge in our metropolis, the prevalence of a sentiment which restricted the activities of a clergyman to pastoral duty and to the pulpit. In England, ministers are often justices of the peace; they hold seats in boards of education, are prominent in municipal affairs, appear on the platform at reform political meetings, and touch social life on all its sides. In France the *curé* is a kind of local magistrate,—a counsellor in all sorts of affairs. In Germany, the *pastor* is recognized functionary of the State. With us, a clergyman must be a man of unusual force who can engage in what are regarded as secular matters without impairing his professional standing.

So restricting is this sentiment that but few American ministers appear in the world of literature, aside from sermons, polemical essays and commentaries. We have no Crabbe, nor Croly, nor Sydney Smith, nor Kingsley, nor Chalmers,—not, probably, because of inferior talent, but because a strong, conservative environment restrains clerical ventures into the field of letters. Nor do our denominations tolerate the free criticism found in foreign churches. They are too conservative for that.

About the time that Goldwin Smith left Cornell University, he drew an indictment in a review article of American conservatism in the matter of trusts and bequests, saying that so sacred in our eyes were the rights of property that we would suffer a dead man's will to brew almost any pestilent atmosphere, rather than change an item of the testament, and he thought future generations would curse the conservatism of this when time had alienated our testamentory and other endowments from living sentiments and customs. The Constitution of the United States forbids Congress to pass any law impairing the obligation of contracts, and all our States have adopted the same restriction. The courts have construed this provision so liberally that legislative grants immediately turned to vested rights which the sovereign authority cannot withdraw. Perhaps the principle is wise, since it is so much easier for Government to encroach on private rights than it is to recover them when once lost. But there is no other country in all the earth which has so barred its Government from interference with property or has so facilitated the turning of public functions into personal emoluments.

The American respect for law is another evidence of conservatism. Often it has been noticed that there is no turbulence in American crowds, no violent righting of wrongs, because there is a general confidence in the efficacy of the law. This in despite of lynchings, which are a feature of organized communities in America, rather than of interference with the ordinary course of law. The peculiarity of this trait is its strong contrast with the French, and, perhaps, the German character. The Frenchman of the present day has an almost servile respect for the official personage. This fellow is about the only aristocrat recognized on the *boulevards* and in the concourses of the people. His insignia of office are upon him, and much is done to affect the senses with the pomp of authority. But respect for customs and sentiments is not the corrective of French Radicalism. In America, the official is of small account. Nowhere else is he treated so familiarly, so slightingly. Without any pomp of place, he is made too often the target of criticism. But the solemnity of law is seldom questioned. Now, if law be, as Guizot says, but precedent hardened into custom, and custom worked into statute, then the American feeling in regard to law becomes respect for custom, and this is the essence of conservatism.

In one of his ingenious essays, Arthur Helps argued that the stability of institutions rested upon sentiment and prejudice, and not on reason. Were it otherwise, a syllogism might overturn a government; but feeling is not so amenable to reason. The truth of Mr. Helps's observation might be exemplified by instances from every department of life. It will be enough, however, to notice two illustrations. More fundamental and organic changes have gone on in England, Germany and France in a single generation than in America since the Revolution. Where the government is in the hands of a privileged, a wealthy and an educated class, the modification of manners and of laws is most rapid. Free Trade, emancipation of the West India slaves, household suffrage, Irish Church disestablishment, in England,—imperialism, the gold standard, State railways and the school laws of Germany,—the notorious revolutions of France,—are obvious proofs.

Moreover, it is among illiterate and savage people that customs are inveterate. When Dr. Robinson travelled in Syria, he learned to identify historical sites chiefly by the names they bore among the *fellaheen*. These descendants of the ancient Canaanites, whom Joshua undertook to expel, notwithstanding Hebrew, Babylonish, Greek, Roman and Saracen subjugation, still retained the primal names given by their forefathers to the localities of Palestine. And Dr. Robinson thought this the surest clue to identification through the labyrinthine legends of Greek and Latin monks.

Undoubtedly, under an unrestrained system, democracies will be found the most conservative of people. The dread of them is fallacious. Not the turbulence of the Greek people, but the restless ambition of their tyrants, kept Hellas in agitation. The *plebes* did not pull down the Roman Republic, but senators and patricians, who introduced the foreign Goths into the service of the State. In good sooth, the danger of a