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CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, Sept. 29th, 1877.

THE INDIAN RELIEF FUND.

The welcome rains which have arrived in the famine districts of India, are at last raising the hopes of the active and benevolent people who, in such great numbers and with so much liberality, are interesting themselves in the dire calamity that has befallen so large an area of the Empire to which we belong. Immediate relief cannot follow from this happy intervention, for it will be at least four months before harvests can be gathered as the fruit of the opening of the windows of Heaven. Even then the prostration of all industries and the generally weakened constitutions that will remain will need all that constant and persistent efforts can provide—and in this interval of four long months the battle with starvation has to be waged with unabated vigour. The officials of the Presidencies—few as they are in number—are personally most efficient and if animated by right economical principles and their hands strengthened by sufficient means, they will do all that can be expected of them. There is no need to put any check upon the outflow of private beneficence which will all be required, but there are practical views of general procedure fully looked into, which will, as we believe, be found worthy to be adopted by the authorities as the only means of really meeting the situation in which the Imperial Power finds itself placed. Humane considerations in some sense exclude mere material calculation. Feeling, in such case, is, and should be, often paramount in the breasts of those who claim the honorable title of man. Still there remains a material aspect of the question which it is not wrong to include when we are turning over the immense liability for a fair and dispassionate view of all its issues. We have often enough been told in Canada that the value of an average immigrant into our country is from 800 to 1000 dollars. The condition implied is, of course, that he be a worker and contributor to the general wealth of the community. In the estimate, the return expected is of course spread over a number of years. At his coming into the country he is only an expense to the government, however small that expense may be in comparison with his ultimate value. The population that is perishing at such a terrible rate in India is the one that does the work of the country and also largely makes up the revenue by personal contribution in ordinary years. The position we would advance is, that the expectation of revenue and production

ought to be capitalized in a business way. The revenue alone is counted by millions sterling in numbers not small even in comparison with the great Home Revenue of Britain. This revenue is not drawn upon for the general purposes of the Empire, but, with the help of a certain amount of borrowing for new public works, is made to sustain the government and the protection of the Indian portion of it. Now, in proportion as the people perish, this production and this revenue are lost—and in the exclusive and abstract view of profit and loss—which we have asked leave to put forward by itself—it must be better to make a required expenditure on capital account, however large the outlay required—than to lose the capital, in a large degree, that forms the accounts. The subsidies that will be required for the Indian Relief are a temporary claim. The gain is permanent and fructifying. The interest on subsidies is thus seen to be paid in a course of years out of the increased current returns of those years.

In the view of a business man, who will make an effort of imagination to put a great matter into a nutshell, these subsidies will be no more than will be required to put into the business in a case of unforeseen emergency. The sole difference is that the empire is not limited like a private firm. The claim accruing in any one or two years of a business, however severe it may be, is never so overwhelming as to need denial—if the business is sound, and there are funds to meet it. If the new capital is accessible to the man of enterprise, and it is his settled intention to continue the business from a clear conviction of ultimate success, the advance or increased investment will be certain to be made. The great Indian enterprise does not differ from other enterprises in this view of the conditions. It is worth working and therefore worth sustaining, and our financiers can with perfect ease figure out the result. In the case of the Imperial borrower, the market is open. In the sense of rates and negotiations he will not be hampered. The sum needed will be large. If then we be permitted to take this business view of the situation this great famine has imposed, there can be little hesitation about the course to pursue. The amount of the exigency, however large, will be furnished, and charged upon the returns of those future years which will more than compensate for the great outlay involved. This, we venture to declare, will not be reckless finance such as so many of the European governments have rushed into for useless armaments only inviting destruction and the retarding of human progress, but a conservative arrangement, and neither more nor less than a great but necessary and unavoidable insurance fund. There can be nothing better worth insuring than human life in the sense of sustaining that life with secured returns of payment. If necessary we will apologize over again for looking at this great tract of human history in the view of mere profit and loss, but we trust our reasons for doing so will be fully understood.

THE PROTECTION OF LIFE FROM BURNING BUILDINGS.

We cannot doubt that numbers of good citizens on this continent have found their intelligence and their human feelings much engaged about the mechanical means that are needed for protecting the lives of those employed or lodged in great buildings from a living agony and speedy incineration in the case of the almost general liability of great fires, but with all this there is little doubt that the chief difficulty is one of habit and moral neglect on the part of the population, the proprietors and the constructors, dating from the first institution of this style of building in North America. It will be useless to blink this view of this question. It cannot rest with a civilized man of the governing class to deny the claim that is undoubtedly implied in the contract he enters into with those who work for him or for whom he provides lodging, that he shall, so far as means

exist, protect their lives during the hours they remain under his charge, and under no other condition or lower consideration ought he to assume control or be able to engage their willing services, or to obtain their custom. Our American friends have a lively and in the main just sense of social relations, as is evidenced by the humour and the witty distinctions with which their literature everflows. And the clear conceptions of human life thus implied ought to lead them to a more practical sense of what is due to the great numbers daily congregated in the many storied buildings we speak of, known chiefly as factories, hotels, colleges and asylums. The very ground and starting plane of our modern politics, it will at once be admitted, is the welfare of the citizens without distinction of rank or position, and those politics are impliedly graduated to the urgency of the particular claims. They ought to be always adjusted to such urgencies as the needle to the pole. The urgency of a merely popular cry under free institutions is always more or less unequal and capricious. In the presence of these cries and movements of the crowd, there is nothing easier than for a constitutional government to forget that it is charged with the public health and safety. The warning of the Hotel at St. Louis did not prevent a repetition of the horror in New-York, and what is sadly more to the purpose, it has led to no general provision being made in buildings of the same construction and defects. The great need thus clearly becomes a case for constitutional action. Society must take care of itself as it always has done in the long run. The real statesman deals with living necessities, and shows his courage and his skill in legislating for the situation irrespective of clamour and false glosses of every sort. In this way and by such excellent human instruments, the rule of right can alone exert itself, but this rule will prevail for the brave and wise minister, through the wide support he is sure to obtain from the moral sense of the civilized people he rules over. These people, whether under the British or the American regime, need only to be led aright, and success with the distinction it brings will fully await the political leader. Such leadership of the really valuable kind has always originated in strong convictions of public rights and in honest purposes with perseverance in establishing those rights, and it will be valuable just in proportion as it continues true to the State, the people and its own sense of justice. We are not saying that much may be done to assist or to stimulate the action of the men who have charged themselves with saving the lives of the people. There is not a political or a religious man who would not help his fellow being in dire extremity if the need were made clear to his perceptions, and the means at the same time distinctly pointed out. No one has any doubt upon this point.

It is the question of responsibility and the neglect of eventualities alone that baffle us, and permit great wants in the construction of buildings and in civil appliances to go unsatisfied from one year's end to another. To bring this point of the responsibility, which clearly rests upon the entire body politic, home to the consciences of the individual men whose business it is to be the originators or the maintainers of the needed action, is the admitted difficulty of our politics. It is better to try to solve it than to be overcome by it. There are many ways of contributing to the great result. If they can do nothing more, our modern communities shew the goodness of their hearts frequently enough by the bitterness of their lamentings over acted catastrophes and completed misfortunes. But they can do more in supporting their political leaders to whom the initiative of action belongs. The press has a great mission here, and we are sure it will not deny it; and political men should endeavour to realize for each his own part in the most honorable work that can occupy the energies of a life in a modern and free community. The sentimentalist of the last

century could find his heart melted by the woes of his caged starling. The piteous cry of "I can't get out!"—"I can't get out!" was in his ear the language of the poor bird's plaint. In the times when the words were written there was excuse than now for a mere play of the affections. Now we like to look upon ourselves as full grown men, which will imply the feelings and intentions of men whose hearts are swayed by the truth. Now, we are in the habit of declaring that thought is incomplete if it is not followed by action—and though it be not easy for any one of us to say "I will deliver these poor caged ones in their frightful 8-storied prisons who see the pitiless flames raging all around them, and the living death coming nearer with every moment, it is still possible to determine that practically a hand shall be stretched out to these perishing men and women and children—in all the future"—that each will do what he can to put the method of society upon a better footing, whether it be by word or deed, by preparing opinion or by legislating. We all now know that fire escapes for lofty buildings are a necessity of modern life. Let us have the subject brought on at once and dwelt upon until accomplished. And one word more to those who have patiently followed us. In the interval of supplying more permanent constructions there is the plain expedient of obtaining one or more portable fire escapes for each great building.

The sculptures of FRANK VAN LAPPEN, of Montreal, in the Provincial Exhibition at Quebec, were works of the highest order—rather they possessed an intrinsic excellence that renders classification needless, appealing as they did to the intuitive perception of what is beautiful and good. They consisted of two busts—a girl and a boy in marble—and a pair of statues in plaster of a Lacrosse player and snow-shoer. This pair is published at a very moderate charge, and our young athletes will, we are convinced, be delighted to supply themselves. One of the marble busts was sold in the Exhibition, and we are afraid the Paris Exhibition of 1878 for which they were destined will thus be deprived of a noble specimen. Mr. VAN LAPPEN has only to make himself known to secure an assured fame in the delightful walk of art to which he has devoted himself—and his our best wishes for his future success.

A UNIQUE MEDAL.

Those who have given attention to "collecting" are frequently puzzled to obtain information about some rare object which falls in their way, and it is even at times impossible to gain the desired knowledge; another source of surprise is found in the disappearance, or almost entire disappearance of some coin or medal, or other object, which should be "freely remembered" by every one. We had a remarkable illustration of this lately in the extinction of a book by Charles Lamb and his sister, published recently as 1820. A copy was at length found in Australia, and it is about to be republished in England. We now place before our readers a copy of a medal the origin of which is apparently lost in oblivion.

Dr. J. Howard, of Baltimore, writes with reference to a silver medal presented to his grandfather, Col. John Eager Howard, the hero of the battle of Cowpens:

"I take the liberty of troubling you with regard to the history of a silver medal in my possession, impressions of which I send you. It has a loop by which it may be suspended, and through the loop is passed a piece of blue ribbon, edged with white, known as the Cincinnati ribbon.

"The following reference to it is taken from *Niles's Register* of October 16th, 1824, being an extract from a report of a dinner given by the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland to Lafayette: "From the points where the swords crossed each other were suspended two precious revolutionary relics, the rewards of a grateful country to one of her bravest sons. These were two silver medals which had been presented to Colonel Howard; upon the first was there follows a description of the Cowpens Medal, well known to collectors. The other has the device of an officer pointing with his sword to a retreating enemy, and beckoning to his men to advance, whilst hovering in the air is the figure of Justice with her scales. The motto is, 'Virtute et Justitia Vahet.' On the reverse is the figure of an officer treading upon the British lion and flag, with one hand piercing him with a spear, and with the other holding the end of a chain pass-