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## CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS,

Montreal, Saturday, 7th Oct., 1876.

#### PROGRESS OF CIVILIZATION.

The onward march of civilization is like a great campaign, and those engaged, or nearly interested, can only hope that happy remedial influences will follow in the train of periodical disaster. There is an aspiration of humanity of which all true souls are conscious, and the principle of it is no less than a part of our Christian teachings. Its theory all intelligent and right thinking people readily accept—that is to say, they will admit without difficulty the claim that rests upon them to arrange things so as to subserve the welfare even of the poorest citizen. But when we come to details, we seem all lost together in a sea of mental confusion. Then a thousand reasons are found to spring up why individual members of the body politic cannot themselves act. One is a tradesman; another has ledgers to keep, and a third is crowning the edifice of his success, and is wrapped up in the progress of his family. Respected ministers of Christ's Gospel may often not see their way to take an active part in a social movement, and as a habit, may prefer exhortation to civic assertion. Paul was a Roman citizen, and we look to him for spiritual vigour, free speech, and active love to man. Such examples of inaction, as we have referred to, are the wave-encircled but fatal rocks upon which our citizenship is stranded, entailing in the loss of the good craft the perpetuation of a hundred evils that a national man would feel his first impulse to thrust away as unbearable. "Noble" is a word that comes very freely from many lips. We cannot go on without nobility. It would certainly be a noble thing to make needful social adjustments which all revelation and all rational moral trust tell us have got to be parts of the completed history of man—though not all yet acknowledged. Some powerful spirits, for instance, will yet succeed in convincing men that parapets are as much needed for railway embankments as for railway bridges, and they will be only following in the succession of those distant forefathers who, in their humane common sense, first devised a parapet for a common bridge. In the very presence of calamity, it seems monstrous to neglect the solemn warnings that arise, and so to leave disaster to repeat itself. If our national politics escape a part of their obligations by diverting the chief attention to the pursuit of gain, our civic politics might be more amenable to reason. In England, there is an association for the promotion of social science. It has plenty of work before it. The mortality upon the wharves in our principal cities, if it has not markedly increased of late years, keeps up at any rate with a sickening frequency its tale of suffering and ruin to individuals and families. Men falling into holds of vessels; lumps of coal or heavy packages falling upon the workmen engaged in delivering them; seamen walking over the wharf's side in

the dark, when seeking to join their ships, with drowning accidents by daylight, perfectly avoidable, if men could swim, or if there were but proper appliances, constitute some of these forms of danger to life. Steam explosions, saw and machinery accidents belong to factories; and the aberrations of dynamite and gunpowder to mines. The sad accident noticed in the ILLUSTRATED NEWS last week, as having occurred in the City of Quebec, differed from all the above. It was not at all new in the nature of its danger, nor even new in the absence of provision against it, but only a novelty in its form in the particular place where it occurred. The death of poor F— from the falling upon him of a wall weighted up with coals, created a profound impression in the city. A young man and generally liked, a cavalry officer of the Volunteers, and known as an honorable and energetic tradesman, it was felt that he could ill be spared. Nor was the element of severest classical tragedy absent from the scene. His poor young wife, as an Ophelia with even tenderer ties, would have him not only confined, but wept over. Rushing to the scene in the first conveyance, her grief at beholding the remains of him, who had been more than all else to her, was heart-rending. Nor were the citizens slow to manifest their respect and feeling for the dead, and their sense of all that had happened. They turned out in large numbers, forming a vast train of vehicles on the road to the Mount Hermon Cemetery.

The coffin had been conveyed, wrapped in the Union Jack, and followed by the charger with the military boots of the deceased, succeeded by the troops of the Citadel Artillery and his own Cavalry Corps—all moving in sad, slow rhythm to the strains of the Dead March in Saul—followed by the Service, by the officiating minister in the English Cathedral, and special selections by the organist—who would not have been impressed with the solemn scene! There were moments then and there for realizing the nothingness of earthly things. Outside, the enthusiasm of grief was infectious, even had there been no other motive for engaging the warmest feelings in what was passing. And yet the predominant thought in some of those spectators might very properly have been—what a fearful pity that a part of this good enthusiasm and this kindly impulse could not be economized differently, and led into more practical courses, and that we who are here in the strength of our citizenship and good affection, and unselfish thought for the general weal, could not be brought to devise ways and means for the prevention of accident; to take some pains to preserve life as well as to bemoan the loss of it. Because lives are frequently endangered by the violence of men, we have instituted police. The tradition is now an old one, and the formation of an efficient body of police does not now call for special originality so much as for a sort of military and social aptitude. The safety of residents and visitors, and the disposal of wrongdoers demand this arrangement. We are only conserving ancient ideas in renewing it, and it is always well to do that when they are useful. But practical knowledge is increasing in the world. The adaptation of means to ends has become the philosophy of some. They have recognized, or begun to recognize mechanical and chemical laws as well as social ones; so that in some cities the energies of one branch, at least, of a police force are devoted to sanitary protection. Why, they will ask, should we not extend the protection to human life generally—which is jeopardized by great mechanical forces set going in the business of life, or allowed to themselves going in the neglects of life, as well as by the malaria which we are at length all learning to contend with? Such a detachment, or force, which would need certainly just a little skill in rudimentary mechanics, would never have allowed the defective loading of the wall with coals. Rules would have to be devised for such a force, and when they came to be read, it

would be seen, amongst others, that unstrengthened walls are never fitted to support weights resting against them. They may serve to keep out intruders, or to uphold a roof, and even then require watching and repairing; but a weight of the former kind, a wall will not sustain with impunity, unless made very strong and supported, in addition, by solid buttresses or projections.

#### THE DEPUTATION ON WATER SUPPLY.

The deputation of Agents of Insurance Companies of which Mr. ALFRED PERRY was spokesman, left Montreal, last week, for Quebec, in order to interview, or plead with, the latter city on the question of water supply for the extinction of fires, and was courteously received by Mayor MURPHY, accompanied by the City Engineer, Mr. BAILLARGE. That indeed was certain beforehand. We have yet, however, to learn what effect their representations will produce upon the Council of that city. We may beat about the bush as much as we please, but it will not alter the fact that the civic chest in Quebec is empty, and has been so for some time past. Without money, the citizens can have neither Police, nor lighting, nor water supply in the sufficiency which is demanded by the interests of life and property within the precincts. A motion was lately brought forward for an additional taxation of five cents on the dollar. It was lost by a majority of one only. The rate then proposed might have been too high—and one would have supposed that a modified proposition would have followed. The city, in its essential interests, has however been favored by nothing of the sort, and may now be said to be creeping along its way in a sort of Egyptian darkness that is very unpleasant to think about. The Insurance Deputation represented immense interests. The Council represents still greater ones; and with the frightful contingency of fire ever impending, to leave things *in statu quo* seems little short of insanity. The ways and means have become the first consideration—the modes of expending the appropriation for the Fire Department, though taking technical precedence, are made subordinate. They can never be really subordinate, because they are dictated by the nature of the city's position in regard to fires. The proposition of the Mayor to obtain the report of a qualified Hydraulic Engineer was an excellent one. The function of such Engineer would be almost that of an arbitrator; for an independent judgment is the thing wanted. In parts of the city the water is laid on at present for two hours out of the twenty-four; in other parts, for five hours. Thus, during the greater portion of the day or night, it takes about thirty-five or forty minutes to get the water to the outer wards on the occurrence of a fire after the first alarm has been given. Such a water system is plainly useless for the purpose in view, and makes the city's excellent fire alarm-telegraph almost useless also. It leaves the fire about time for the demolition of a wooden building, and for the extension of the flames on all sides from it. In fires, promptness is everything, as our Canadian Agents do not need to be told. Those gentlemen are doubtless now taking a very wide and Dominion view of the fire question, and if they should make exceptions in favour of particular cities and towns, independently of the injustice of the thing, the companies they represent will be the sufferers. If ever the time for firm and temperate action could arrive, it has now arrived, for a series of such impressive lessons, as we have lately gone through, have seldom fallen to the lot of any country. In regard to fire-prevention in Quebec, we hardly like to speak of details at the present stage; but certainly a good-sized Reservoir on the highest point of Cape Diamond, with fire-mains and hydrants always charged from it, and in sufficient number to have them placed wherever needed, would seem greatly superior to any number of small cisterns at

the foot of the Rock, for the former would be the object of general civic interest and contribution—would be serviceable for fires in any part of the city; and the magnificent water-head it would supply might perform, over the greater area, half the work of extinction before the arrival of the engines.

#### CANADIAN COPYRIGHT.

A very important decision has been just given in Toronto, on this subject, by Vice-Chancellor PROUDFOOT. The facts are briefly these. Mr. SMILES, the well-known author, registered in England, on the 3rd of January, 1876, a work entitled "Thrift." In the following April, Belford Bros., the eminent publishers of Toronto, republished it in Canada, whereupon the author brought against them a suit in Chancery, for infringement of copyright, and demanding whatever indemnity that might entail. The matter was taken up as a test-case, the whole book-trade of Canada backing the Messrs. BELFORD. After full argument, the judgment now given is strongly in favor of Mr. SMILES, the defendants being ordered to pay all the costs and also to pay the author a royalty on all the copies of the book issued. This judgment is important, because it virtually sets aside, as null and void, the Canadian Copyright Act of 1875, approved by the British Parliament, and the Imperial Act authorizing Her Majesty to give it her assent. In other words, we are led to understand, if this judgment is accepted as authoritative, that our publishers stand to-day on no better ground than they did in 1842, when a prohibitory act was passed, and that the attempts at amelioration made in 1847, and theoretically carried out in 1868, are of no avail whatever. This, it must be admitted, is a sorry state of things and would be unendurable, had not our publishers some relief in another quarter. That relief, however, although it may be accepted as a boon to them, is not advantageous to the country, as it will deprive Canada of employment for printers, designers, engravers and paper makers, and transfer it all to the United States. The fact is simply that the defendants in this case have no idea of appealing, regarding the judgment as perhaps more beneficial to them than an adverse one would have been, as they will have their reprinting done in the United States, and pay the duty upon the importation. So far as they are concerned, this may be actually a profit, but it speaks ill for the country that drives them to it—if indeed, it does drive them, which we hope will yet be decided by another tribunal—when they would be only too willing to do all their work at home and have Canadian workmen profit by it. Mr. LEVITT has already been forced to remove a large portion of his establishment to the United States, and certainly the present aspect of affairs is not of a nature to invite him back. Young as we are, we ought to have a literature of our own, our people are fond of reading, energetic and plucky publishers are anxious to supply this reading. But if obstructions are thrown in their way, it will be impossible to make any progress, and we shall continue to rely upon the stranger for our mental food. We urge the earliest possible reconsideration of this whole matter.

#### CROSSED CHEQUES.

The frauds and swindles lately perpetrated in this city and elsewhere, our bank offices has suggested the use of the "Crossed-cheque" system adopted in England, by Act of Parliament, in August last. As this procedure is not generally known, we shall briefly describe it. The Act provides that a cheque may be crossed with two transverse lines simply with the words "and Company," or any abbreviation thereof, such as "& Co.," when the cheque is deemed to be crossed. Generally the cheque so crossed must be paid to a banker, otherwise the banker paying it will be liable to refund the loss, if any is sustained through