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THE CANADIAN Illustrated News.

HAMILTON, OCTOBER 3, 1863.

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THE MEANING OF THE WAR.

An attempt to anticipate the verdict which philosophic history will give, in the case of the present American war, may seem presumptuous, while the pelting of its pitiless storm is still carrying destruction through the length and breadth of a continent.

Yet the distinctive features of that contest are so broadly marked, so clearly defined, as to leave the task, in our humble opinion, a comparatively easy one.

The struggle, as a tangible reality, no doubt took the world by surprise. But it was by no means an unforeseen struggle. To attentive thinkers it has long been pre-figured by the condition of things in the United States. Its imminent probability has long given a depth to the forebodings of the eminent statesmen of the Union; on the confines of a material prosperity peculiarly brilliant. They saw it coming in imperfect yet dark and hideous outline. When would be the time of its birth or what the specific form it would assume, were open questions. But that it would have birth in some form, seemed inevitable. And why? Because simply, men saw within one political system the active development of two social systems essentially antagonistic in their natures. The one, with many imperfections in its practice,—holding up progress and civilisation as the ideal to which it aspired. The other, with perchance some rays of light to illumine its otherwise unmitigated darkness, glorying in retrogression and barbarism. It was impossible that these systems could remain in contact without coming to blows.

The whole political history of the United States is little else than a record of efforts to avoid this struggle. At every turn the American people have been confronted by the same huge difficulty which has, at length, rent their nation asunder, probably never to be re-united. It confronted the 'fathers of the republic' even in drawing up the 'Declaration of Independence,' when, in order to prevent the secession of Georgia and South Carolina, Jefferson was compelled to expunge the clause condemning the slave trade.

It was present with the convention which framed the Constitution where Jefferson again attempted to set bounds to the barbarous system, by proposing the exclusion of slavery from any territory to be hereafter obtained by the United States. His resolution was defeated by a majority of but one.

The most important senatorial battle however, between the contending parties, was fought on what is popularly known as the "Missouri compromise." To understand the merits of this question it will be necessary to remember that in 1787 a law was passed which prohibited slavery in the United States territories lying north and west of the Ohio river. Missouri lay within this interdicted region, so by the terms of the law could not hold slaves. But as part of the territory of French Louisiana she already held them; and supported by the pro-slavery party, affirmed her right to be admitted to the Union as a slave State. The debate on the question was protracted and acrimonious. Mr. Cobb, of Georgia, with a prophetic truthfulness which at the time he could scarcely have realized, declared that "a fire had been kindled which all the waters of the ocean could not put out; which only seas of blood could extinguish." The affair

ended with the substantial triumph of the slavery party. Their opponents however obtaining in return a law prohibiting slavery in all the territories of the Union, lying north of the parallel 36° 30'—the Southern boundary of Missouri.

The same fatal spirit of compromise, which up to this time had characterized a section of the Northern people, the same flinching from the issue which was forcing itself upon them, was again manifested in the passage of the fugitive slave law of 1850. One of the vilest enactments that ever disgraced the statute book of a nation. But all their compromises, all the shufflings and quackeries of little politicians, were powerless to avert the coming struggle. The little cloud which scarcely disfigured the brightness of the morning sky that saw the nation's birth, had increased in size and deepened in hue until it spread over the land a dark and sullen gloom.

With the repeal of the Missouri compromise a few years ago and the substitution of "squatter sovereignty" in its place, the contest was transferred—say rather extended—to another field. The new law gave the people of the territories power to settle the question of slavery themselves, to adopt—on their admission to the Union as a State—either a slave or free constitution as they might elect. Kansas was the first to enjoy the blessings of the new doctrine, and in a way which few of our readers can have forgotten. In the determined efforts of either party to secure the new state to its side the first blood of the approaching struggle was spilt; the first fruits of a fast ripening harvest gathered. Passing from this to the election of Mr. Lincoln, merely noting the John Brown raid in the interlude, we come to the point at which the attempts of political quackery to solve the momentous question before it, fairly broke down. Its "platforms," its "conventions," and its "stump oratory," alas how miserably impotent in such a crisis.

All right thinking men must wish that the stern and bloody struggle which followed, and is now raging, could have been avoided. But seeing that it has been fairly entered upon, let us hope that its close will witness the accomplishment of its legitimate purpose, namely, the overthrow of slavery. But here let us guard our readers against misapprehension. We are not now arguing in favor of either North or South. We do not expect either of them to abolish slavery from any higher motive than that of necessity. But happily the teachings of this war must go far to convince the most stubborn that slavery is a political blunder, a non-paying, or rather, a losing speculation. This lesson once pressed home, will soon be followed by the conviction that it is also a moral crime. Moreover, it seems more than probable that both the belligerents will yet be driven to seek an alliance with the despised African race, the first condition of which will be its emancipation from bondage. Truly man's necessity is God's opportunity.

CIVILIZATION; WHAT IS IT, AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

We are in the habit of boasting of the civilization of the Nineteenth Century. We point to our railroads, canals, ships, and printing presses; our machines for manufactures of every description; our discoveries in almost every conceivable branch of art and science; we know the distance from the sun of all the planets, how large they are and how much they weigh; we know that earth, air, fire, and water are not elements, in fact we know so much, and can do so much that we really startle ourselves when we narrate our wonderful achievements. Then we point to all this, and we call it civilization. Undoubtedly we possess many advantages over those respectable but somewhat slow going people we call our ancestors. We have responsible government and railroads; free knowledge and phrenology; magna charta and magnetism; cheap testaments and cheap travelling; balloons and the ballot, and a large assortment of general civilized merchandise, 'too numerous to mention.'

But is this civilization? Let us look: We get gunpowder, printing and some other trifles from the Chinese. We get painting, poetry, sculpture, the alphabet, etcetera from the Greeks, and so on, with half-a-dozen other ancient nations. Then it follows that as we borrow civilization from them they were more civilized than we are? We can scarcely grant the inference.

But are we really any happier? Are the sufferings of the poor alleviated? Does life fly along more pleasantly with the great body of the people than it did in the days when Friar Bacon was dreaming out schemes for destroying dragons and building steamboats? We seriously doubt it. In other words, we believe that civilization does not of itself promote the happiness of the human race. There are more people pinched by want in Merrie England now than in the time of the Saxon kings. We read of a period when men might hang their jewels by the roadside, without fear of

their misappropriation; but that was long before railroads or the Reform Bill. And we are told of a young lady, lovely and bejeweled, who rode completely round the 'gim of the say' without encountering a single spoliator; but that was before the days of 'Peelers.' There are bad men in enlightened times and climes, as there were in the olden; there is suffering and want enough, God knows, even in such a plentiful land as ours; there are wars, and always will be; there are devilish inhuman men who trade upon the necessities of their fellows; and misery and famine stalk around us on every hand. In the face of all this, we build our self-laudatory altar, where we bow down and worship our great god—Civilization.

Alas! our enlightened ways are all at fault—our civilization goes for nothing. We must still trust to the kindlier instincts of the heart, common to humanity in all ages and in all places, to relieve the poor and do justice to the oppressed. We have made the world a machine shop; but have we given a crust of bread to the poor? We have bound the land in a net-work of railroads, and covered the sea with floating palaces; but are we any happier or any better than we were before? We have subjected the elements to our will and made them our slaves; we are the lordly masters of the world—

But we, who name ourselves its Sovereigns,
We—half dust, half deity, alike unfit
To sink or soar—with our mixed essence make
A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride,
Contending with low wants and lofty will,
'Till our morality predominates,
And men are what they name not to themselves,
And trust not to each other.'

THE GORE, KING STREET, HAMILTON.

The demand for last week's number of the "Illustrated News," the first of our enlarged sheet, and printed on our new Mammoth Press, has completely exhausted an extra large edition. At the request of numbers of our subscribers both old and new, we repeat in this issue the view of the Gore on King Street, which formed so attractive a feature in our last. As no letter-press description accompanied the picture then, a few words now may be appropriate.

It is to the liberality and foresight of the late George Hamilton, Esq., the former proprietor of a large portion of the ground upon which the city now stands, that Hamilton is indebted for the healthful luxury of this 'breathing place' in its business centre. The same gentleman also gave the space occupied by the old market, now the wood market, for the use of the citizens; and Prince's Square, formerly the Court House Square, and the site of the Gaol and Court House, for county purposes. It was Mr. Hamilton's proposition to Mr. Hughson, then the owner of the land along the north side of King street, that they should each give a portion of ground, sufficient to form a long rectangular open space in what was expected to be the central part of the town. Mr. Hamilton's part of the agreement was fulfilled, but Mr. Hughson's was not, and in this way the Gore came to be left in its present shape.—Had the original design been fully adhered to, the north side of King Street, east from James street, would have been parallel to the South side, leaving a long open space with four square corners, of an exact and symmetrical outline. However much it may be regretted that such was not the case, the citizens of Hamilton, both in time present and to come, may well be thankful for the space that is left, where the free air of Heaven gets some room to play in amongst them; and which adds so much, as now improved and ornamented, to the effective appearance of the city.

Previous to 1860, the year of the Prince's visit, the Gore was vacant, with nothing but its greater width to distinguish it. But in that year, by the liberal private efforts of the citizens, aided by the joint action of the Council and the Water Works Commissioners, the existing improvements were effected. The iron railing and the arrangement of the walks and spaces were designed by Mr. Haskins, the City Engineer. The large fountain in the centre, as also the smaller one to the eastward, opposite to the Wesleyan Female College, are from designs by Mr. Robb, C. E. The drinking fountain at the west end, surmounted by three splendid gas lamps, is a present to the city from Archibald Kerr, Esq., for long a resident here, now a few years since returned to Scotland.

On the right hand side, south-east corner of King and James Street, stands the extensive wholesale grocery establishment of Brown, Gillespie and Co., (formerly W. P. McLaren & Co). Next to this is the Bank of British North America, a very handsome and substantial stone structure; and the wholesale warehouse of Kerr, Brown & Co. At