

OUR ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE.

Mr. Editor,—

In carrying on a correspondence with you I shall endeavour to be really an "English Correspondent." I shall not keep my eyes and ears open only for items especially interesting to you locally, but shall aim at telling you in a chit-chat sort of way what people in England are really interesting themselves about, and I daresay that many of your readers will be pleased if I can take them "home" in this way for a while. In the first place then, I will tell you what English people are not talking about—they do not talk about Halifax or Nova Scotia. It is rarely that I meet even among "well informed" circles any people who even know exactly what part of the world Halifax is in; and those who do happen to have a vague idea that it is somewhere in America would be puzzled if asked whether it was in the States or a part of Canada. In fact, a lady friend of mine, on hearing that I had just returned from Nova Scotia made some inquiries about some relations of hers "out there" "somewhere—I think" she added, "the place is called Rio de Janeiro"—and when I went to the Post office of one of our leading fashionable towns—Cheltenham—to ask when the Mail for Halifax closed, I was told "every Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday." "Nonsense," I said, "It is no nonsense," said the official, pointing out triumphantly in the printed list, "Mails for North America." I must, however, do him the justice to say that Halifax was not even mentioned in the Post Office list. I am quite sure that I might with much greater ease find a needle in a bundle of hay than a person in England who knows who Dr. Tupper is, or Mr. McCully, or even that local genius of yours, Mr. Benjamin Wier, whose comprehensive mind enables him to imagine the waters of the St. Lawrence pouring into Bedford Basin or the Dartmouth Lakes, and in short I do not find any cause for apprehension that the British Lion would be roused if the Haligonians do not enter into Confederation with Canada, as is felt by the *Reporter*. No doubt there are some of your readers who to quote Tennyson—"think the rustic murmur of your bourg,—" "is all the world"—who will smile in kind pity at the ignorance this shows.

Until the last few days I have never heard a single person say anything about the American War, but the publication of President Lincoln's Inaugural Address and the generally believed account of the extraordinary scene of a Vice President reeling "Drunk and Disorderly" into the very embodied presence of the majesty of a huge, if not great, Anglo Saxon people, babbling inarticulate John Brightisms, and laying blasphemous hands on the Awful Book—these things have certainly attracted a little attention, but it is that kind of attention which belongs to two sensations, those of the sublime and the ridiculous—those feelings which nature prompts us to entertain when the high are brought down to low places, and which at the same time compel us to laugh in ridicule at the contemptible exhibition. The following extract from a New York paper struck me not only as an extremely clever epigram upon the subject, but also as a very correct mode of expressing English opinions thereon:—

"The rhapsody of a jester affecting to be devout:—the "mouthings of a drunkard affecting pride in his low descent"—thus commences the Presidential term."

I cannot, however, quite share in the attempt to cast ridicule upon President Lincoln's address. It is not a subject for ridicule. I have as yet been even unable to learn why Abraham Lincoln is taunted as being a "jester,"—he may be a witty old man and his quaint appearance may make everything he says sound funny; but Lord Palmerston is a witty old man too—and, in fact, Abraham Lincoln is really a very popular man in England—he is regarded as a sort of Yankee Lord Palmerston—with a big foot to put on anything which it is awkward to

move off. As for the rest of the Yankee officials nothing can exceed the disgust which is entertained about them, they are positively regarded as unworthy the consideration of any honest man, at all events those whose names like Mr. Seward's are known,—but Abraham Lincoln seems to be thought an honest man, and withal a clever man. The difficulty of preserving his honesty in association with dishonest partners is fully recognised here, and he is much respected. People are much disappointed in getting a sermon from the Presidential Chair. It seems, by the way, that Parsons are not to have the monopoly of sermon writing—here is our Poet Laureate trying his hand at it in Aylmer's Field and his pretty imitation Jean Ingelow has taken the queue; and now Abraham Lincoln thinks it the duty of a President not to arrange merely days of Thanksgiving but to tell his people what is the "will of God" according to his interpretation of the Scriptures; but people will not believe that, "if the war continue until all the wealth piled by the Bond—" man's 250 years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until "every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword" it has anything to do with the "will of God,"—they remain convinced even after reading the sermon, that it is simply a political question, answered according to the "will of the North and South, who are almost unanimously represented by Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis"—and even those people who admire Oliver Cromwell on the pages of history do not think Oliver Cromwell suitable to the present age. It may or it may not be political skill in Abraham Lincoln to foster the religious alliance of his people by Abolitionism as Oliver Cromwell did by Puritanism—but mankind will not respect religious phantasies. Puritanism, even in these days of its kindred fashions, Temperance Leagues, Revivals, Orange Societies, or Fenianism, would not now be regarded as honest—people will not regard as the Gospel of our Merciful Father, that it is His Will that brother should be arrayed against brother either in bloodless strife or in a fratricidal war—whose victims are holocausts to the God Moloch not to the God of Mercy. I myself have a sneaking regard for Charles the 1st., and had I lived in those days I am sure I could not have been a Puritan. I could not have killed my brother with a text of Scripture in my mouth. If I had had to do so I should have had to keep my religious notions pretty quiet during the operation. Talking about Puritanism, I once saw in the City Road, London, an Inn with a sign which puzzled me, "The Goat and Compasses" and a picture of the sign swung over the door. At first I thought it must be some Masonic hieroglyph, but upon inquiry I found that in the days of Oliver Cromwell public houses used to adopt texts of Scripture for their Puritanical tipplers—and that in those days the Inn was called "God encompasseth us,"—since metamorphosed to suit the tastes of another generation. "The Goat and Compasses." I wonder whether Abolitionism has reached a similar state of fervor in the U. S. yet—whether Andy Johnson took his deep potation under the sign of a Bible quotation! I do not think, however, that I need be a religious enthusiast to say that Abraham Lincoln's address will take a high rank in literature as literature. Apart from the diplomatic use, or as I consider it abuse of Religion—the document is simple and grand—alike free from self glorification for the Past or boasting for the Future. If Louis Napoleon is correct in the theory he has enunciated in his pretentious work the "Life of Cesar"—that a Divine Providence has marked the course of human affairs by raising up particular men such as Cesar or Bonaparte—it seems that Abraham Lincoln thinks the new era of his people has culminated in his day and in himself, and that a sort of inner feeling persuades him he is the appointed Apostle of a new Evangel for a nation started not a century ago with similar ideas; but we must not forget that Mormon Smith and Jefferson Davis likewise think themselves Messiahs of Civilization. The

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