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THE TIMES.

A great deal of excited feeling has been roused by the action of the Montreal 65th Volunteer Regiment in turning last Sunday afternoon into a time for drill and manoeuvre practice, shooting, &c. The members of the 65th are, I believe, exclusively Roman Catholics, and they have the answer to criticism thus: 1st. There is nothing prohibiting it in the Queen's regulations; 2nd. Being Catholics, the Church which we acknowledge has not opposed regimental practice, or any other such thing in the after part of the Sabbath day—for we give the morning to worship; 3rd. We were scrupulous not to interfere with the peace and comfort of the Protestant part of the city and went to Logan's farm, which is away from everybody who could take offence at our proceedings; and 4th. Why should the Protestants expect us to regard the Sabbath as they do, when they do not regard our sacred days? Ascension day is as sacred to us as the Sabbath can be to the Protestants, but on that day the Protestant Volunteers practised precisely as we did last Sunday, without ever thinking that we might deem such things an outrage on our religious sentiments. Do not the Protestants generally believe that "what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander"?

Yes, I think they do, and on the whole the men of the 65th have fairly good ground to parade their reasons upon. But the fact that the Queen's regulations do not prohibit Sunday practice goes for nothing. There must be several other things possible to men which are not provided against in the Queen's regulations. Do those regulations anywhere declare and affirm, in the name of Her Most Gracious Majesty, that an officer in command of a regiment shall not march his men at the double quick into the river? or that the Volunteers shall not be permitted to shoot down their officers when they feel inclined for a little sport? or that they shall eat a particular kind of food before going to drill? I think not. Our Roman Catholic friends must remember that the "Queen's regulations" for Volunteers go upon the assumption that the Protestant form of religion pertains among all British Volunteers, and upon them there is no need to impress the sacredness of the Sabbath. There are no Volunteer regiments in Ireland, I believe, and Great Britain has no French colony, so that the regulations were made for Protestants.

And that is, perhaps, the best answer to the other arguments I have quoted. If it comes to a simple question of rights and religion, I should say that the Catholics with their views of Sunday and feast days and fast days have exactly the same right to practice on Sunday afternoon as Protestants have to do the same thing on any Catholic holiday. The fact is that this, like many other things, is rather a question of expediency than of rights. If the Catholics persist, I would say let them have their own way, and make no fuss about it. But I would advise them not to persist. This is a British colony, and a Protestant country, and it would be well for Catholics to put themselves under that idea as much as possible. This is no question of individual rights, and conscience, and creeds, but of sentiment, and in such a matter the general opinion of the country should rule. If the Catholics determine to use Sunday afternoons this way we may soon

have those about us who care for neither the Catholic nor Protestant idea of Sunday, but will insist upon their right to blaze away all the Sunday long. And as a people, we cannot afford to disregard the old injunction to "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

A warning note has just come from France. The Senate, by a large majority, has passed the first reading of a bill which provides for the repeal of the law of 1814, which rendered obligatory the celebration of Sundays and holidays. France has tried this before—in a much more sweeping manner—but it proved a disastrous failure. The Sabbath was made for man; it is an institution which grew out of the needs of man's nature, and no people can outlive its destruction. History has told us plainly enough that the observance of the Sabbath is imperative, if humanity would maintain its body and soul. Just now it looks as if, in France, body and soul are once more to be put at imminent risk. Communism is lifting its head again, and its look is threatening. Strikes are taking place in almost every manufacturing town, and disorder appears to be assuming an organized form. It is not at all certain that the army will be powerful enough to cope with this monster rising, and the rulers of France ought to learn that they have need of moral as well as military force in order to good government.

I suppose the question of making Montreal a free port is shelved for the present, although the city aldermen have appointed a special committee to consider the communication addressed to them by the Board of Trade. Special committees, as a rule, move slowly; in fact, they generally mean an adjournment of the question. The Government has promised to look into the matter next year, and meantime matters will be allowed to go from bad to worse. We can ill afford this delay, for the state of affairs is growing desperate. We may shut our eyes to the fact, and talk of general depression and the natural slowness of a healthy return to prosperity, if we like, but the truth is that Montreal is undergoing a very sure, if not a very rapid process of decadence. We are failing to hold our own in the competition with Boston and New York, and the western trade is gradually drifting away from us. At last it dawned upon the minds of some of our business men that we might divert traffic to our harbour if some of the disabilities were removed. But the Harbour Commissioners raise the query: why was this not done before? and the Government insists upon making it a part of a great question and consideration affecting the two Provinces of Quebec and Ontario; and the aldermen are ruled by Mr. Allard's opinion "that the French-Canadians are as competent to serve on the committee as any others." The fact is that we have such a division of interests that the welfare of the whole can never be looked at in a fair and practical manner. We are a disintegrated people; each section preying upon the other; Ontario and Quebec have but little in common, and Toronto would rather favour Boston or New York than Montreal. The Province of Quebec is divided against itself; sectionalism is rampant and bitter; a little free criticism upon a Frenchman or French institution raises the cry it is because it is French and not English, and anything proposed by the French-Canadians is sure to be suspected because of its origin; East and West are supposed to be hostile, and when even a public abbatoir is proposed, the question is sent spinning about, is it to be at the East end or at the West end?

Some bold step is required, something radical and unique to save Montreal, and, pending the fusion of the races, which is a work of time and sober sense, nothing has been suggested better than that Montreal be made a free port. I hope the French-Canadians who have been elected to the aldermanic special committee will show that they can entertain a regard for the welfare of the city as a whole.