

The Canadian Spectator.

VOL. III.—No. 28.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, JULY 10, 1880.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM.

CONTENTS :

THE TIMES.
TORONTO AND ABOUT.
TRADE, FINANCE, STATISTICS.
CANADA'S DEBTS.
AN UNTIMELY AGITATION.
A CONTROVERSIAL HORNET'S NEST.
YOUNG LADIES' BEAUTY.

POPULAR SAYINGS ABOUT CATS.
HOW WE WENT TO THE COUNTRY.
THINGS IN GENERAL.
POETRY.
CORRESPONDENCE.
MUSICAL.
CHESS.

THE TIMES.

The peasantry in all countries may be classed as ignorant, for they form the lower stratum of society, but it is hardly likely that any peasantry in the world could be more dense than some of our French-Canadian *habitants*. According to evidence given at the Berthier election trial, one of the priests found no difficulty in persuading his congregation that the Quebec Legislative Council had its origin in the Mosaic dispensation, and is akin to the ancient Sanhedrim. Could stupidity be more stupid? But the fault is not on the part of the poor people; they have had no chance of learning to know better; the fault is on the part of the priests, who should have taught them better. Granted that the work of the preacher is to declare the gospel of peace—still he is expected to expound ecclesiasticism on its historical side—and only one sermon, devoted to the subject, would have convinced even an *habitant* that the Jewish Sanhedrim only once degenerated to anything like the Quebec Legislative Council, and that was when, on a memorable occasion, it made appeal to Pilate to destroy the Light of the world.

From the same evidence, it is plain enough that Roman Catholic priests should be prohibited, by law, from taking any part in politics at election times. It is all very well to say that they are citizens and have a right to exercise their influence as well as any other men, and that Protestant ministers do often busy themselves about political matters; but priests claim to be citizens and a great deal more. A Protestant minister makes no talk about excommunication, Episcopal authority, the Pope, heaven and hell, and such like things; but the priest goes to his flock using all the terrors of his terrific theology to induce them to vote according to his mind. He professes to have the keys of heaven and of hell and frightens the poor *habitant* by his strong language. That is as surely "undue influence" as it would be to present a pistol at a man's head and tell him how to vote if he wishes to live, and it should be so regarded in the eyes of the law.

What can be expected of a people when their teachers and spiritual advisers are so ignorant or so malicious as those Berthier priests appear to be? The talk that Providence had brought about the death of Bishop Conroy because he had declared for ecclesiastical non-interference in politics was worse than wicked. Enquiry should be made into the educational attainments of those priests; if they are simply ignorant, the Church should undertake to educate and civilize them; if they are malicious, the Church or the State should send them to some kind of Penitentiary. Such men do incalculable mischief, and in the public interest the law should protect the poor *habitants* from such cruel wrong.

The Jesuits cut a sorry figure at the meeting they managed to get up in the lecture hall of their Church on the first of July. Not content with the procession through the streets, they organized a sort of protest talkification, and, as is the way with Jesuits, inveigled several prominent men to attend under false pretences. Judge Loranger presided, and in an address utterly unbecoming his position, denounced

the French Government, as well as all French-Canadian Protestants, and glorified the Legitimists. The taste displayed in the speech was execrable, and M. Frechette and others did well to manifest their disgust and leave the hall. Those who imagine that Ultramontanism will rule even this Catholic Province of Quebec are very much mistaken.

I have received letters and articles in bitter protest against the proposal to erect a statue to the late Hon. George Brown in the Park at Toronto, but I can see no good reason for publishing them, or for opposing the statue scheme. It is all very well to say that Cartier, Baldwin and many others better deserve it, but the simple answer is: why did not the friends of those men think of it? Mr. Brown was, at any rate, a prominent character, and a foremost man in his day; the demand for money to build the statue is not upon the public exchequer, but upon private good will, and the Toronto Park is sadly in need of a little ornamentation. Therefore, I would not oppose, but in every way encourage the statue scheme. Those who desire to subscribe can do so; no one is compelled.

There are certain Canadians and Australians in England just now devoting their spare time to the discussion of the question of an Imperial Federation. One would think that whatever dreams of that sort might be entertained by the English out of England, a fortnight's residence in the old country, and half-a-dozen conversations with those who have an acquaintance with the British temper toward the colonies, would bring them to a knowledge of the fact that public opinion is so decidedly opposed to it that no representative body of men would waste their time and risk their reputation for practical common sense by discussing it. Sir A. T. Galt may lend the vagary his name and aid, and even then it will be a hundred miles outside the range of practical politics.

But the Montreal *Gazette* has the idea that while an Imperial Federation as to politics is unlikely, if not impossible, it is quite possible, and would be advantageous, to bring about a commercial federation of the whole British Empire. It sounds well enough—a British Zollverein—Free Trade wherever the Queen rules—but the well enough is only in the sound, for it can never be reduced to practice. First of all, it is to ask the English to give up *en bloc* all the doctrines of their great gospel of Free Trade and adopt Protection in a violent and selfish form. That is to say, it would be to put Free Trade in fetters and call it Free Trade, for the *Gazette* would evidently have each colony put on a tariff to meet the expenditure, and it might very well happen that Great Britain would need a revenue tariff some day, and duty would be exacted on stuff sent from the colonies. Then, why should England favour Canada or Australia by putting on a discriminating tariff against foreign nations? What has Canada done for England, except provide a sphere in which one of her aristocracy can move and semi-shine for five years at the time? What can Canada do for England that the English people should be expected to buy their stuffs in our markets, even though they are dearer than they could be got in other countries? Canadians would never consent to pay a dollar of taxes to carry on a British war, nor in any other way bear a portion of their financial burdens. Imperial federation is just as likely as political federation—and no more.

But if the *Gazette* can thus calmly argue for a commercial union with Great Britain—appearing to doubt already the working of the N. P.—which would not change our political relations—why can it not see that the same kind of union might be made with the United