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CONTENTS:

THE TIMES.
LIFE AND PEACE.
SCIENTIFIC MODERATION.
CHURCHES AND CHURCHES.
AN IMPORTANT PUBLIC DOCUMENT.
SAUNTERING.
THE STORY OF THE OKA INDIANS.

A MODERN 'SYMPOSIUM.'
IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN WAR.
NINO BIXIO, BY EVELYN CARRINGTON.
CURRENT LITERATURE.
SPECIAL NOTICES BY THE EDITOR.
ETC., ETC., ETC.

THE TIMES.

The Ottawa House of Commons has witnessed once more a pitched battle between Protection and Free Trade. The debate was neither hot nor able, scarcely a member rising to the point of eloquence. Of course some courtesies were freely exchanged, such as personal accusations of "malignity" "untruth," and such like things. Both parties are agreed to have free trade in those decencies of Parliamentary debate. By the way, a Protective tariff in the matter of their speech would be acceptable, almost popular in the country. But the vote has gone for Free Trade, although the majority is reduced. The end of the session can hardly be far off. A railway bill or two, a possible measure or two, an impossible or two, the Hon. Peter Mitchell's bull and blunder, and then—the deluge—and then—who knows? *Vive Somebody.*

The Quebec mess got muddled, and now is found to be mud, which the Lieutenant-Governor will find it difficult to wade through. It was hoped at first that the Boucherville Ministry had resigned—which would have compelled some little respect for them, and would have reduced the awkwardness of the situation a little. But they had no such self-respect, and the Lieutenant-Governor is deprived of that handle. They were summarily dismissed. His Excellency meant to be a wise man, but failed. He should have exercised his prerogative sooner or later. Later would have been better, for the Government's Ultramontanism and rottenness would have become more apparent. It was a party move without doubt—right as to matters Constitutional—but, a political blunder. The Lieutenant-Governor has played his trump card—but played it badly, and stands to lose the game.

Some of the hot-heads of the Rouge party in Montreal have been busily discussing the appointments held under the Quebec Government, by respectable and efficient men, apportioning them to their wildest and most noisy adherents at election times. We are glad to hear, however, that there are wise and responsible men in the Liberal party, who will discountenance any dismissals of men holding permanent offices unless there are better reasons than that followers of the new Government want situations. Canadian politics are sunk low enough; but God grant that the system in vogue in the United States, that after each presidential election the civil service employes are to be changed all throughout, should be imported into Canada. A more cruel, heartless, and iniquitous process can scarcely be devised than that men who are settled down in their employments with families dependent upon them should for no fault of their own, but simply by a change in the government of the country, be thrown adrift in the world, unused as they are to other occupations, and none offering for them to earn their bread.

The offices falling vacant during the term of an administration are legitimate patronage, but to despoil Conservatives of their positions might shortly be made to recoil on those who have reaped the advantages of the "party of purity" in Ottawa. So it had better not be attempted.

Rowdyism is still rampant in Montreal. This week a quiet, inoffensive young man going to his home in the evening was ruthlessly shot down, and now lies in serious danger of his life. He is a Catholic, and thinks he was shot at by Protestants. Most likely he is correct, for both Protestants and Catholics can boast of having as big a set of rascals in the city of Montreal as in any part of the world. They call themselves by a name, but know nothing, and care nothing, for the form of faith that name is generally held to represent. There is no

religion about it, and no real question of politics—only rascality. They are simply low, sneaking, cowardly ruffians who go about in crowds to attack single individuals; with arms they attack unarmed people. The glorious Grand Jury of immortal memory must be held as responsible for this in a great measure. They made murder comparatively safe, and then—it may be that some ruffians calling themselves Protestants took it into their heads that they might do a little of the same sort of work. But they must be disenchanted, and that soon. That Grand Jury has ceased to decide what is justice. We express no opinion upon the case now before the Police Magistrate: that he will do his duty we are sure, he knows how and when. But the Police are the city guardians. We would suggest that a number of picked men be stationed in the dangerous localities, dressed in plain clothes. Let them go in couples, have arms, and a whistle, or rattle, to summon help in case of need. Let them arrest all loiterers—said loiterers should be subject to a heavy fine if carrying fire-arms: should have the lash if they have fired a shot—the lash and imprisonment for life if they have wounded any one. That would stop the shooting business.

Ontario journalists are so taken up with Diminution politics and the crisis in Quebec, that they have had little to say about the shortcomings of their Local Legislature. But the Ontario Assembly has nevertheless most unmistakably lost ground in influence and in prestige by its failure to advance in line with the progressive march of current public opinion. There is only one subject on which the legislators of that Province are always up to the mark, and that is the administration of the law. Any matter involving legal questions is sure to arouse animated debate, and the Assembly Chamber rivals Osgoode Hall in its display of forensic lore. In fact the lay element is quite thrown into the shade by the compact phalanx of Toronto lawyers, who have contrived to ingratiate themselves into the confidence of provincial constituencies. It is questionable whether the public affairs of Ontario would suffer even if Mr. Bunster's idea of biennial sessions could by some means be enforced upon the acceptance of the Legislature. If annual sessions must be maintained, the same work now performed by eighty-eight members might be fully as efficiently carried on by half that number. There are forty-two counties in Ontario, and if each were contented with a single representative, with an additional member from each city, the result would probably be advantageous in every respect. It is furthermore abundantly manifest that a province which pays its executive officers such liberal salaries has a legitimate right to claim their undivided time and efforts in the administration of provincial affairs. Possibly reform in these matters may come some day, but just now it is difficult to see where it will come from.

The peace conference is to be held at Baden-Baden. Lord Lyons, the Ambassador at Paris, will represent England. Bismarck has declined to be present, and Germany will be represented by Herr Von Bulow. No date for the meeting of the assembly has been fixed. Russia is not in a hurry to have her conditions of peace criticised and revised. Revised they will be without doubt, for they press with exceeding severity on the conquered Turks; Roumania protests, and the Greeks are disquieted; because Russia proposes to take the portion of Bessarabia given her by the Treaty of Paris; and the Greeks regard the entire arrangement as aiming at the suppression of Hellenic aspirations for the future. England and Austria will be disposed to criticise Russia somewhat severely, and as their interests are identical, they will probably do it successfully.

Meantime war preparations go on in England. The Channel squadron, consisting of four first-class iron-clads, has arrived at Malta to receive orders. The Government have purchased two iron-clads that were built for the Porte. The materials for a railway twenty miles in length are being collected at Woolwich; the Birmingham gunmakers are happy, being under orders to make 150,000 Martini-Henry rifles; while South Wales is made lively by the demand for 100,000 tons of steam coal. The six millions will soon be spent it appears. And all this is preparatory to a peace conference at Baden-Baden. The English representative will have some very cogent arguments with which to bring Russia to a reasonable mood.