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The story of "THE LAW AND THE LADY," which has been terminated in the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS, proved very acceptable to our readers, and quite redeemed the pledges we made concerning it when we purchased the right to publish it in our columns. That our judgment of its merits was well founded we learn from a letter of Mr. Wilkie Collins himself, who informs us that it is already being published in five continental languages—French, German, Italian, Russian and Danish.

Desirous to continue maintaining the standard of our serials, we have, after much consideration, chosen over many competitors one of the great works of

Erckmann-Chatrian,

whose reputation is world-wide, though not appreciated as it should be in Canada. The work selected is

The Story of a Peasant,

or Episodes of the Great French Revolution, a master-piece of style, interest, and idealized realism. It is, perhaps, the chief work of the illustrious authors, full of information and entertainment.

CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, April 10th, 1875.

THE TEA TRADE.

A few weeks ago, we had occasion to allude to the disadvantage under which the Canadian Printers and Publishers labour, as compared with their brethren in the United States. Last week, our cartoon depicted Jonathan turning the strikes of Canadian mechanics to his profit, laughing at our 17½ per cent. tariff, (which we did not mention) protected as he is by 35 or 40 per cent. And to-day we place before our readers another branch of commerce wherein our cousins across the border have the better of us—the wholesale Tea and Coffee trade. The remarkable statement lately published, and which we subjoin, of the comparative imports of tea and coffee into Montreal in February 1874, and February 1875, led us to make enquiries, the result of which has confirmed the impression we had formed that this branch of business was literally dying out. These are the figures:

Quantity and value of tea and coffee imported at Montreal during February, as compared with the corresponding month last year:—

	1874.		1875.	
	lbs.	Value	lbs.	Value
Tea Green and Japan	485,902	179,246	19,300	5,571
Tea, Black	102,008	34,806	3,708	4,446
Coffee, Green	199,710	45,611		

The importation of tea in Ontario and Quebec for the last three years has been as follows:

1871-2	8,950,976	lbs.
1872-3	12,046,798	"
1873-4	8,776,781	"

This gives an average yearly importation of 9,925,000 lbs, value \$3,473,750. The profit, on this amount, to the importer and wholesale merchant cannot be estimated at less than \$175,000. This sum it is, which is about to be transferred to the United States, besides the Ocean freights. Under the present tariff, black tea pays 3 cents, and green 4 cents per lb. duty on coming into Canada, no discrimination being made against any country. In the United States tea enters free, unless it comes from Canada, when it is mulcted 10 per cent. The abolition of the corresponding 10 per cent differential duty on teas imported from the United States has opened our market to the American tea merchant, placing him on a par with our own importers, whilst the latter are excluded from sending tea across the line. The influential movement made by the Canadian tea trade to have the differential duty restored has proved unavailing, and the United States authorities are too keen to remove the 10 per cent against us. As a consequence, Ontario is already buying its teas in New York, the wholesale merchant is ceasing his importation, and before long, there will be in Canada only branches of New York importing houses, and jobbers, or brokers in tea, but no direct importers at all. Even at present, the largest houses here have the bulk of their stock in New York, and will eventually, should the present state of things continue, remove thither altogether, taking over to Uncle Sam their capital, their intelligence, and their enterprise. Prominent tea merchants in Montreal have assured us that unless the 10 per cent. here be restored, or the 10 per cent. in the United States be removed, their business here cannot be self-supporting, and must be closed. Ah! but the consumers! Have they not the immense market of the United States open to them to select from, and will not the retailer and his customers be benefited? Not in the least. When the retailer bought here from the direct importer, he bought at the first selling price, and paid but one profit; should he go to New York, he will never see the importer, but will have to buy from the Commission merchant, or the jobber, and pay two profits, or from the wholesale dealer, who bought from these, and in this case, he will pay three profits, and the consumer is no better off. Indeed the likelihood is that both retailer and customer will pay more for teas bought in the American market, than ever they did for direct importation. The removal of the United States differential duty would be preferred by our tea merchants, to the re-imposing of the 10 per cent. in Canada against United States teas. For then, they would keep their business here, and store here their whole stock, thus favoring our Ocean carrying trade; while they could export to the States, and compete on an equal footing with American importers. To this, then, we trust that our Administration will direct their efforts. Should they succeed in securing Reciprocity on this one article, the discontent now existing would disappear. Otherwise, parties interested see no hope for the Canadian Tea Trade, except in the restoration of the 10 per cent differential duty in Canada.

PACIFIC RAILWAY BILL.

The only thing that has looked like a little excitement in the dead level of the present session, was the final vote on the Pacific Railway Bill. On that occasion Mr. BLAKE and other supporters of the Government voted with the opposition; and for the first time this session, the Government had only a majority of 27; the division being, on a motion of Dr. TUPPER to provide for laying all the Pacific Railway contracts before Parliament for final sanction, Yeas, 64; Nays,

91. There was a previous amendment to read the bill a third time, three months hence; but this was lost on a division of Yeas 62, Nays 101. Mr. BLAKE, Mr. RYMAL, Mr. SCATCHERD, and other supporters of the Government, were found voting among those who desired to kill the Bill; but SIR JOHN MACDONALD and Dr. TUPPER voted with the Government on this motion. This greatly important Bill in this way passed all its stages in the House of Commons.

It embodies those provisions of compromise between the Dominion Government and the Province of British Columbia which have before been described in these columns. But as they involve considerations of such vast importance to the people of the Dominion, it may be well to repeat that the Railway Line from the Pacific to Lake Superior is to be completed by the year 1890; the Government spending not less than two million dollars a year in British Columbia on this work. The Bill also provides that the line from Esquimaux to Nanaimo is to be proceeded with forthwith. The main-land surveys are also to be pushed immediately and vigorously to completion.

Mr. BLAKE and some of his friends held that these terms were too onerous for the Dominion and ought not to have been conceded; but it is certain that they are very much less than was solemnly guaranteed to British Columbia by act of Parliament as the condition of her entering into the Confederation. The measure of the Government is, therefore, a compromise; but as it has been accepted by British Columbia, a great good is gained; and we are inclined also to think that the opening up of a vast region of undoubtedly very great natural wealth and resources, will give such a stimulous to the progress of the Dominion and the increase of immigration as will render the burden assumed comparatively light.

The measure of the Government is further necessary in order to keep good faith with the Imperial Government, its provisions being the award of Lord CARNAVON which the country is in honour bound to accept after the reference made to him. And what is of still more importance is that they enable it to preserve its honour in its relations with British Columbia, which ought to be the first of all considerations for any country, but especially for one entering such a career as Canada has now before her.

UNION OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES.

It will be news to most of our readers that the Confederation of all the British North American Provinces was the result of a meeting of delegates of the Lower Provinces for the purpose of establishing a union among themselves. The greater idea absorbed the lesser in 1867, but the latter has never been wholly abandoned, and, just at present, it is occupying attention among our brothers on the seaside. It has even been brought forward at Fredericton by Hon. Mr. WILLIS, a member of the New Brunswick Government, in an eloquent and exhaustive speech which contains all the arguments which may be advanced in favor of the scheme. Mr. WILLIS sets out with the affirmation that a legislative compact between Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island would produce a large saving in the administration of public affairs, prevent local prejudices, increase the influence of the Maritime Provinces in the Dominion Parliament and add power to the deliberations of the Dominion representatives. Assuming, as, we believe, he is justified in doing, all the other clauses of his proposition, he confined himself to showing minutely the economical advantages of the union. He showed first that there would be a saving of \$16,000 to the whole country on the salaries of Governors, as well as a further saving of many thousands of dollars to the three Provinces concerned in keeping up establishments which under the union would be dispensed

with. In Executive management he contemplated a further saving of \$18,870; in Legislative expenses, a diminution of no less than \$36,381. Taking in other details which it would be tedious to mention, the speaker calculated the total saving at fully \$100,000, a figure that could still further be increased some \$15,000, if it were thought desirable to reduce the membership of the popular branch to 50, and to abolish the Legislative Council altogether. With regard to the seat of Government, which would be sure to be a bone of contention, even if the other terms of union were agreed to, Mr. WILLIS expressed himself as quite prepared to waive the claims of New Brunswick. He held that Fredericton City would be better as a manufacturing centre, which it ought to be, than as a seat of Government. In any case, he was willing to leave the matter to the choice of a convention, subject to the approval of the people's representatives.

THE SHORTEST ROUTE TO EUROPE

This is a very important question to Canadian trade, and the Parliamentary Committee appointed to investigate it, has just published an interesting report. The question, of course, resolves itself into the choice of a proper winter port, and, after careful attention, the selection seems to be narrowed down between Louisburg in Cape Breton, and Paspébiac, in the Baie des Chaleurs. The former is represented as a first-class harbor, with the geographical advantage of being the nearest available harbor of the Dominion to Europe. It is 230 miles nearer to Europe than Paspébiac, and 196 miles nearer than Halifax, by the direct route. The approaches to it are very easy, the anchorage is good in the north-east portion of the harbor, which is entirely sheltered from winds, and its waters are capable of floating vessels of any size. Similarly, Paspébiac harbor offers all the advantages of a first-class harbor, and is open and approachable from the Gulf of St. Lawrence at all seasons of the year. In examining into the merits and demerits of the harbor, the Committee deemed it advisable to elicit all the information possible regarding the navigation of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It appears that the southern and western portions of the Gulf are perfectly navigable at all seasons of the year. The Arctic ice which is carried into the Gulf through the Strait of Belle Isle, strikes the N. E. of Anticosti with a velocity of current of half a mile an hour; the ice from the River St. Lawrence is borne upon the southern shore of the same island with a force of current of two miles an hour; and the stronger current from the river forces the Arctic ice towards the western shore of Newfoundland, thus, leaving the southern and western portions of the Gulf safe for navigation. It has further been shown that the tidal current entering the Gulf between Cape Breton and Cape Ray, is divided by the Magdalen group, and that the wave which passes southward of the Magdalen Islands holds in check any ice which may appear north of the islands, thus keeping free from accumulation of ice that portion of the Gulf lying north of Cape Breton and south of the Magdalen Islands, and as far north as Cape Gaspé.

Assuming Quebec as an objective point, the distance between that port and Liverpool is

	Water.	Land.	Total.
Via Halifax	2,466 miles.	622 miles	3,088 miles.
Via Louisburg	2,270 "	790 "	3,060 "
Via Paspébiac	2,500 "	400 "	2,900 "

making a difference in favor of Paspébiac as compared with Halifax of 188 miles; and in favor of Paspébiac as compared with Louisburg of 160 miles.

The Committee recommends that a survey be made between Louisburg and some point on the Intercolonial Railroad, to ascertain the practicability of building a railway between the most suitable point of that railroad and the harbor of Louisburg; at the same time, that a proper survey be made, and report be given upon the best