



TRUTH FOR THE PEOPLE

OLD SERIES—17TH YEAR.

TORONTO, ONT., APRIL 18, 1885.

NEW SERIES—VOL. V. NO. 237.

WHAT TRUTH SAYS.

People may fancy that Mr. Gladstone has a rather hard time of it on certain occasions, and so he doubtless has, but his position is one of perfect peace and tranquillity in comparison with that of a French Prime Minister. Accounts of the resignation of M. Ferry at Paris a few days ago would seem to indicate that the life of a French Premier is not a happy one, for so inflammable is that people that a very small spark will cause them to flare up and burn furiously, and some object must be found on which to vent the flame of popular wrath. A cabinet minister's fall was never more ignominious and complete than that of M. Ferry, Not only was his resignation accepted on the spot, but loud demands were made for his life, Henri Rochefort declaring that he should be guillotined at once. And all this fuss took place because the French got whipped at Lang Sen the other day. One would think the French ought to be pretty well accustomed to being thrashed by this time, as the war in China has been more prolific of defeats than victories to the Gallic invaders, in spite of the fact that, according to the French press, every engagement resulted in victory for their troops. Popularity is but a transient matter anywhere, but verily there is no knowing at what hour and at what moment a French public official's popularity may vanish like the flame of a candle in a hurricane.

Whether England and Russia are to have a regular set-to in Afghanistan or not is just now doubtful, but everything seems to indicate that a collision must, sooner or later, take place, and if such be the case, the sooner the better, as certain other Powers which might wish to take a hand in, unfavorably to Britain, are just now fully employed with their own affairs and cannot spare time to interfere in the Eastern row. There has been a pretty good scrimmage already between the Russians and the Afghans at Penjdeh, in which the latter were defeated with the loss of five hundred men. As Britain is bound to protect the Ameer's interests against Russian aggression, it is extremely probable that war will follow this engagement. At present it seems difficult to tell who has been to blame for the collision between Afghans and Russians; the latter lay the blame on the former, and the Afghans retort by saying, "You're another." There can be no doubt, however, that the Czar would like to get hold of Penjdeh, and it is quite possible he may have already done so. The importance of this place arises from the following facts: It forms a kind of out-work to the local market town of Mervood, which lies about twenty miles south of it, higher up the river Murghab, which, flowing northwest from the Gtoor mountains to the oasis of Merv, 180 miles north of Herat, is the most direct approach to the latter place from the side of Russian Turkestan; Penjdeh completely commands this approach from its position on the left bank of the

stream. We may rest assured that the Russians would make a very slight provocation on the part of the Afghans a pretext for attacking them and getting hold of such a place as Penjdeh, and they have most probably been the aggressors in the conflict which has already occurred.

The British Government recently wanted a number of horses for cavalry purposes. Canadian breeders and farmers have horses which are admirably adapted for such purposes, and which they wished to sell. Indiana, U. S., has a number of inferior horses for sale. When Americans want to purchase good horses they send to Canada for them. The British Government wished for horses and bought them from Indiana. Well?

The Hon. Ignatius Donnelly, of Chicago, alluded to in these columns last week, is still proving to his own unbounded satisfaction that Lord Bacon was the author of Shakespeare's poems, and that William was not much of a poet after all. Mr. Donnelly, it seems, has made a life-long study of the subject of cryptography, and he divulges the secret: an ingenious theory by which he claims to be able to establish incontrovertibly the authorship of the plays of Bacon. One thing is also incontrovertible, and that is that neither the sweet singer of Stratford-on-Avon nor his lordship can be called on to testify, or, if called on, it is very improbable that either will respond, and the Shakespeare-loving public will not easily allow their idol to be shattered by the iconoclastic Ignatius Donnelly. That gentleman certainly makes out a very good case, and his claim is made to appear more plausible by the fact that Bacon was an adept cryptographer. Space will not permit a full explanation of Mr. Donnelly's alleged wonderful discovery, but he asserts that the cypher which he professes to have discovered shows conclusively that Lord Bacon claims the authorship of the works ascribed to Shakespeare. Mr. Donnelly puts forward many, apparently convincing arguments in support of his theory, and all that can be said is that if it turns out that Mr. Shakespeare never wrote his own works he ought to be ashamed of himself for gulling the public for over 300 years, and people with low foreheads will take great comfort in learning that a gentleman with the magnificent towering brow universally believed to have been worn by Shakespeare, was only a kind of rhymester after all, who didn't know much.

The Rev. James Patterson is a Philadelphia clergyman, and his head seems to be level. He, doubtless, believes in the efficacy of prayer, but he does not appear to believe in praying to Heaven for things which will be furnished in the natural course of events without being prayed for. His opinion is that ministers of the gospel should be poor and humble like their Master. Speaking to a number of his parishioners this eminently sensible divine said:—"I have often prayed," said he, "that I might be kept humble; I never prayed that I

might be poor. I could trust Buttonwood-street Church for that!" If newspaper reporters are to be believed there are churches not a thousand miles out of Toronto that can be trusted to produce similar effects.

In the same way that a thief is supposed to be the most efficient person to catch another of his own species, so the Ameer of Afghanistan appears to be the sort of a gentleman to deal with the wily Russians, Both Afghans and Russians are about as treacherous and untrustworthy as any people on this earth, and are up to all sorts of tricks and dodges, but possibly England may just now put more confidence in the Ameer's professions of 'friendship than in the protestations of honorable intentions on the part of the subjects of the Czar, as he, doubtless, has a keen eye to British gold, a metal that ever rings with a most seductive chink in the ears of an Oriental. The Ameer certainly outwitted the Russian officers whom he discovered to be spies endeavoring to find out the nature of the relationship between India and Afghanistan, and who had accepted his hospitality. The wily Ameer had a series of letters of a most misleading nature prepared and placed in such a position as to lead those who found them to imagine that they were meant to be hidden, but where the Russians would be sure to come upon them. They did so immediately, and telegraphed their purport to St. Petersburg, thus leading the government most completely astray, and those officers now have the satisfaction of knowing how nicely that cunning Ameer has "done" them.

Last week a most alarming report reached us from the North-West to the effect that several tribes of American Indians had crossed the frontier and were taking the war path in conjunction with the Bloods, Piegiens and other Blackfoot Indians. Soon after the rumor began to circulate it was found to be utterly baseless. The *Globe*, in commenting on the false report, says: "What it indicates is that the people in the neighborhood of Calgary and Fort McLeod are losing faith in the quietness of the Blackfoot." With all respect to the *Globe*, this false report indicates no such thing, in our estimation, but it shows that a most able liar is loose somewhere who is doing his best to cause alarm; for what purpose is best known to himself.

"Our lads" of the Q. O. R. and Royal Grenadiers who have been sent off to the North-West are reported to have (to use a vulgar phrase) "toughed it out," well so far, and have surmounted the difficulties of the march, blizzards, sleeping in wet clothes and all the other disagreeables which go to prove "how merrily we live that soldiers be," with admirable pluck and fortitude. It is, we believe, a fact that the majority or at least a large percentage of these young fellows are either members of athletic associations, lacrosse clubs, &c., or are in a great measure ardent devotees of athleticism in some shape or form, and there can be but little doubt

that the stamina displayed in the trying marches to the North-West has been developed in the athletic sports in which our volunteers take so prominent a part. Such a fact is a strong argument in favor of a gymnasium for Toronto, a scheme to establish which has been on foot for some time but which has not met with the encouragement it deserves.

The massacre of eleven persons by Indians at Frog Lake is merely a taste of what these uncivilized red men are capable of when once they start on the war-path, and of what may happen on a very much larger scale before the troubles in the North-West are ended. There seems to be no doubt that such a massacre actually took place, but it is extremely hard to know what to believe about this rebellion when the papers on one political side are manifestly magnifying every unfavorable report, whilst those on the other say but little about the same report, or suppress it altogether. If the Indians immediately in the neighborhood of Fort Pitt, which is about 40 miles from Frog Lake, are determined to continue their bloody work, then it looks very much as if Inspector Dickens and his small force of 25 Mounted Police, together with those few men, women and children who are cooped up in Fort Pitt, are in an extremely perilous position, unless speedy succor reaches them, for they will certainly be cut off should they attempt to retreat to Battleford, a distance of nearly a hundred miles. However, it is impossible to say what a day may bring forth, and there may be no further massacre after all, which is the best way to look at the matter.

It may be stated that the Inspector Dickens, whose name figures in the despatches from the North-West Territory, is said to be the youngest son of the eminent author, Charles Dickens. If this be true, and there is no reason for doubting the assertion, the gallant inspector has inherited but little of the genius and brilliancy of his gifted father, though he is said to be an excellent officer.

There appears to be every indication of a general Indian rising in support of Riel, and the danger to the more remote settlements cannot be over estimated. It is doubtful if the force now on its way to attack Riel is strong enough to affect anything, and the prospect is that the rebellion will not be quelled until a good deal of blood has been spilled.

In his last batch of foreign nominations, Mr. Cleveland has stuck to his policy hitherto pursued, of naming men whose selection is a surprise to both parties. There are certainly many obscure names in his list, and those which are known are not in any way noted. The South has a large share. A better way to show the magnanimity of the North toward the latter could hardly be devised than by sending them abroad as representatives of the Government they tried to destroy.