

CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1873.

The disaster to the cable steamer "Robert Lowe," sunk last week off the coast of Newfoundland, following so closely upon the burning of the "Bavarian" on Lake Ontario, should have the effect of bringing into earnest and vigorous discussion the most serviceable and effective means of saving life at sea. Although the circumstances that attended the loss of the two steamers were very different, there can be no doubt that the loss of life in each case might have been largely diminished, if not wholly avoided, had the proper apparatus been at hand. The breaking-out of the fire on board the lake steamer was followed by a panic such as invariably proves fatal. With one or two honourable exceptions, the crew, officers and men alike, seem to have lost their wits, and as naturally might have been expected, the life saving apparatus was not used to the extent or with the success that it might have been. As it was, only two boats were lowered the others being found so firmly fixed in their cradles that in the excitement of the moment, it was found impossible to dislodge them. In the case of the "Robert Lowe" the vessel filled and settled down so rapidly that there was no time to get the life-boats afloat. There appears, so far as can be gathered from the meagre report telegraphed from Piacentia, to have been little or no panic. The captain was on the bridge at the time of the disaster, was perfectly cool, and devoted himself to the task of saving as many lives as possible. Yet his coolness and heroism were alike unavailing, and though his efforts were in a measure crowned with success, seventeen souls, including himself, went down with the wreck. With these two cases before us, each of a different nature, but with the same fatal effects we are compelled to believe that the apparatus now in use for saving life at sea is by far too elaborate. Life-boats and life-preservers are well enough in their way, but experience has only too fatally proven that they are frequently utterly useless. The boats are often stowed away in a corner where they remain untouched for months. By constant exposure to damp air wood-work and ropes become swollen, and when the critical moment arrives the boat refuses to budge and the ropes to run through the davit blocks. It is evident that some simpler and more effectual plan should be adopted. One of the most sensible suggestions that have been made on the subject is that of life rafts, light and unencumbered structures which could be launched without difficulty, even in the time of a panic, and which could not be easily swamped or sunk. There can be no doubt that were such a plan adopted the annual loss of life at sea would be very considerably diminished. In the case of panic the difficulty to be overcome is of course much greater. Yet much can be effected by example and by strict discipline. In this connection, the destruction of the "Wawasset," on the Potomac, taught a most salutary lesson, and one which—and this more to the point—has been turned to advantage with the most gratifying result. This is the enforcement of a system of regular drills on board steamboats, by which the efficiency of crews in case of disaster is very largely increased. The idea is an excellent one, which we hope shortly to see very generally carried out. The results attained where this system is in use have been all that can be desired. It has been demonstrated that in a minute and a half from a given signal the hose can be brought into use, the buckets got in readiness, the life-preservers distributed, and four life-boats launched. It is not, however, the actual space of time in which these operations can be performed that is important, so much as the necessary training and routine which will be found so useful in the hurry and confusion attendant on an accident. The great thing is to ensure coolness, method and regularity on the part of all hands. Had this system of drill, which is somewhat akin to that of fire-brigades, the survivors from the "Bavarian," and in all probability from the "Robert Lowe" would have had a different tale to tell.

A question which naturally throws great light on the prospect of the United States going to war with Spain, but one which, nevertheless, has been strangely overlooked by most writers, is the bearing such an issue would have on the financial condition of the Union. The present state of things through the States is unquestionably very gloomy. All branches of trade, all lines of industry, such as factories, workshops, mills and mines, have experienced the prevailing depression. Forty thousand workmen are thrown out of employment in the city of New York alone. In thousands of other cases, hands are reduced to half time and consequently to half pay. The darkest apprehensions are entertained for the winter. The papers prophesy that there will be more than one instance of absolute starvation to record. Under these circumstances, it is easy to conceive what effect a war with Spain would have. There would, of necessity, be a large issue of new government bonds. If an inflation of \$44,000,000 is already deemed requisite to relieve the New York bankers, what could it become in case hostilities were declared? There would be momentary relief, certainly. Money, for a few weeks, would appear to flow freely. But the experience of the past shows us what direction it would speedily take. The bonds would be bought up by speculators, the premium on gold would rise and the price of every commodity—already so high—would be ruin-

ously elevated. The poor then would suffer immeasurably more than they are doing now, and the trade of the country would meet another stunning check. During the next three months, which are the great exporting season, the exports from all the ports of the United States, will presumably reach the figure of two hundred millions, while the imports will not go beyond one hundred and forty millions. That leaves an excess of sixty millions in favour of the United States, far more than enough to pay for freight on imports and interest on bonds held in foreign markets. The remainder must be settled for in specie or securities. In case of a war, there would be an issue of new bonds, as we have said. That would effectually exclude the negotiation, in America, of United States securities at present in foreign hands. The only recourse would be to take gold. But the importation of gold from England would be too great a strain on that market, at the present time, and it would have the additional disastrous effect, from an American point of view, of completely preventing the exportation of cotton to England, where there would not be the specie to buy it. Those who understand the importance of the cotton staple will feel all the force of this contingency. It is true the South would more directly suffer from the embargo, but the result would affect the North as well, because from the North are derived those supplies which are furnished to the South and made payable on the moving of the cotton crop. It is sincerely to be hoped that there will be no war with Spain, on high international grounds. But this consummation is still more devoutly to be wished for, on lower humanitarian principles. The large masses of the poor are miserable enough at present, without having their condition aggravated by the terror of war prices and the grinding exactions of speculators.

If there is one man in Europe for whom an honest person ought to entertain respect, that man is the Count de Chambord. He has the courage of his opinions. He is above bribes, menaces and intrigues. He has a lordly aversion for that detestable thing called compromise. He possesses ambition, else he were not fit to be a prince and a ruler. But his ambition is not selfish. It is subordinated, like a trained steed, and his whole love is for his country. His principles may be antiquated, they may be subversive of the present order of ideas, but he honestly entertains them and he boldly expresses them. He is willing to stand or fall by them, which is more than can be said of many leaders of our renovated society. There is something affecting in the life of this prince. His birth took place under remarkable circumstances; his presentation to the soldiery at Rambouillet when only ten years old, was full of pathos and his long exile since that date is but a series of pathetic incidents. If the Count had spent his time, as so many royal exiles do, in the enjoyment of his vast wealth and the pursuits of pleasure, our respect for him would be only commonplace. But instead of acting thus, he has led a quiet, unostentatious existence, occupied with his books and his household and always devotedly attached to the interests of France. He has never intrigued for the throne. He has never conspired to advance his dynasty. He has bided his time with heroic patience, keenly following the progress of events in his native country, and preparing himself to serve her whenever opportunity offered. That opportunity presented itself more than once, but under circumstances which he could not conscientiously accept. He has never attempted to force circumstances. Only the other day, he might have allowed himself to be led by the current which seemed to drift him directly to Versailles. But he was not thoroughly satisfied and he said so. If the Count lacked either intelligence or character, we might attribute his conduct to indifference or pusillanimity. But he is known to be brave, both physically and morally, and his mind is one of the most cultivated in Europe. His actions are based on principle, and we must therefore admire him, however much we may dissent from those principles. Another claim which the Count possesses to the esteem of the world, is the purity and simplicity of his private life. For a Bourbon, the exception is a notable one, going far towards our belief in the amelioration of the race. Unfortunately, this good prince has no descendants of his own and his legal heirs—the princes of Orleans—lack that record for personal virtue or political consistency which is necessary to inspire confidence in the utility of their reign over France. Fortunately, since the refusal of the Count de Chambord to ascend the ancestral throne, the chances of the Orleansists have diminished still more. Let us hope that they may never be revived.

The conviction of Tweed was, we believe, unexpected by most people, and its announcement was at first received with a marked degree of incredulity that was but little complimentary to the administration of justice peculiar to New York. The fact is that the record of successful and unpunished rascals on the other side of the line is already such a lengthy document that a few additions would not have excited any very great surprise. In fact, many observers, perhaps, looked upon the acquittal of the Great Panjandrum of public defaulters as a foregone conclusion. And indeed the supposition was not an unlikely one. The accused was a man of influence and immense wealth. In the States the latter is the magic password which throws open every door. His political influence extended not only over the city and county of New York, but throughout the Empire State, and he may

be said to have controlled the Albany Legislature for years. It is true that two years ago, when the Tammany Ring was broken up, much of Tweed's prestige was impaired, but still it was generally supposed that he had friends and money sufficient left to hold his own and forestall the ends of justice. To the satisfaction and relief of the whole country such has not proved the case. An honest jury, and an honest judge were found prepared to do their whole duty and they did it with a promptitude and energy deserving of the highest consideration. The moral effect of Tweed's sentence will be prodigious. It will go very far indeed towards elevating the level of public morality in the United States and will restore confidence in an elective judiciary. We should not be surprised to find that the news should create a buoyancy in American securities held abroad. Taken altogether, the event is one of the most important and notable of the present year.

"It is possible," says the London *Graphic*, speaking of the 'shameless inventions' of the *New York World*, "that there are American journals who deem this kind of matter acceptable to their correspondents, but whether dealing with public or private individuals it is their duty to take care not to publish false and mischievous libels. For much less reason an English newspaper recently confessed itself deceived, and gave up the name of the contributor to public odium. It is only by like conduct that the *New York Daily World* can hope to maintain its rank among respectable journals." We manage these things better in Canada. Here a journal laying claim to the highest respectability may publish the most atrocious rumours—such for instance as the report of the suicide of a public man who lay at the time under the gravest accusations—without in the least degree forfeiting in the public estimation its rank among respectable journals. And yet we complain because Canadian journalism is not so highly respected abroad as we should like to see it.

It appears that the principal objections entertained by some persons to the new Premier, are that he is a working man, that the cut of his clothes is not beyond criticism, and that his household belongings are not on a scale of extreme magnificence. Had those who cling fondly to these defects in Mr. Mackenzie's status and appearance had the good fortune to have received their education at Westminster they would bear indelibly impressed on their mind the maxim "manures make ye man." However, *non culis conijit adire Corinthos*, it does not fall to the lot of every man to be brought up as a gentleman, nor for that matter, to become a Premier.

That is a good proposition which a writer makes in one of the daily papers, to the effect that the Montreal Passenger Railway Company should be compelled to hold annual meetings open to the press, and to publish a certified statement of their dividend. Without entering into a discussion of the Company's manner of conducting business, we judge it only fair to the public that so important a corporation should be brought to obey the general rule.

Reform is evidently to be the order of the day in very earnest under the new Ministry. It is stated that the clerks in the Government Departments at Ottawa, will now be required to work from ten till six, instead of from ten till four. Considering the arduous nature of the duties to be performed the change will doubtless be sincerely deprecated—especially by those who are immediately concerned.

The fidelity of party journals in following the lead of their chief is at times simply marvellous. Not the least remarkable thing about Sir John's resignation was the devotion with which some of his newspaper supporters felt called upon also to resign—their principles.

The inquiry into the fearful disaster of the "Bavarian" has been conducted with proper research and dispatch. Let us hope that the punishment, if any is deserved, will be equally swift and commensurate to the crime.

"What will they say in England?" was the cry of the ex-Opposition press some weeks ago, when the 'Pacific Scandal' "What do we care what they say in England?" is their cry at present.

At the banquet given him by leading citizens of Ottawa, Sir John expressed his desire to retire into private life, but confidently predicted the return of the Liberal Conservative party to power.

Mr. Joseph Arch has changed his mind in regard to Canada, and now extols it in the highest terms. His friends in England are, however, disgusted at his having dined with Lord Dufferin.

Southern planters will not sell their cotton to Northern dealers except for gold. There are over one million bales of cotton lying over in the South till spring.

When will the Opposition papers begin to treat their readers to something else than Sir John A. Macdonald's speech at the Ottawa banquet?