

THE NORTHERN LIGHTS.

A NOISE SUPERSTITION.

"Nay, mother, nay: the pictured coal is glowing. Dully and redly on the hearthstone there; You was no flame of careless idlers' throwing. Nor rocket flashing through the startled air 'Twas but the gleaming of the Northern Lights— Ah, there again, they reddened Humboldt heights.

"So let me raise you softly on the pillow, See, how the crimson lustre flares and dies, Turning to red the long leave of the willow, And the great arch of all the starless skies: The Eschers say such beauty bodes them sorrow, Telling of storm, and wind to blow to-morrow."

"No, child, the busy wife may bait her lines, And not and gear be ready for the morning, No presage in that wavering glory shines, No doom in the rich hues the clouds adorning: They do but say the lingering hours are past, The gates, the golden gates, unclose at last.

"Won, the long hill so steep and drear to climb, Done, the long task so bitter hard in learning; The tears are shed, and garnered up by time, The heart beats, freed from all its lonely yearning: The bar swings back, and, flowing seas and skies, Burst out the deathless lights of Paradise.

"See, see, by the great valves of pearl they stand, Friends, children, husband; see glad hands outreaching! For me, for me, the undiscovered land, Its promise in that rosy signal teaching: Ay, kiss me, child, the lips will soon be dumb, That yet in earthly words can say, 'I come.'"

Again the banner of the Northern Lights Waved broad and bright across the face of heaven; And in the cottage on the rugged heights, The passing radiance, by their glory given, Showed a pale orphan weeping by the bed, And the calm smiling of the happy dead.

THE ANCIENT CAPITAL.

PARLIAMENTARY—MUNICIPAL—SKATING RINK—A NEW WAR THEORY—ART EXHIBITION.

To-day the House awakes after its holiday rest, the blinds are drawn up, the furniture uncovered, the extra employees have returned, messengers who were clad in every day apparel now present an eminently respectable appearance in swallow-tails, white gloves and neckties, and lastly the members have returned en masse. Yesterday besides the Cabinet Ministers and those members who reside in Quebec, the Hon. Geo. Bryson was the only member of either House who had returned; to-day, however, members are as common as blackberries; one cannot stir half a dozen rods without rubbing shoulders with one.

Of course, it will be impossible to fill a letter of any interesting length with simply Parliamentary gossip, but so far as it will go, I will retail all I have gathered during the recess.

A Conservative member told me the other day, that if the financial condition of the Province was as low as rumor states it to be he would propose, for the sake of economy, either to abolish the Legislative Council or refuse to vote them the usual \$600 per annum, also he would suggest the abolition of two portfolios in the Cabinet, those of President of the Council and Solicitor General, neither of which offices he considered as necessary for the governing of the Province.

A rumour is also current that Mr. Tarte, member for Beauport is, to be brought before the Bar of the House, for having written disrespectfully of the Lieutenant-Governor in *Le Canada*, a newspaper of which he is the editor, concerning the difficulty alleged to have existed between His Honor and Mr. Attorney-General Angers, the particulars of which are already familiar to your readers.

A propos of that scandal, another rumour has it that, it having been made a Cabinet question, a motion will be made to bring down all papers in the matter, when, if such motion prevail, we shall get at the truth of the story. As it stands at present, Mr. Angers has the advantage. He declines to say a single word on the subject, alleging if it be a Cabinet question, his mouth is sealed, therefore all particulars we have hitherto received together with the authoritative denial, must have come from the other side; indeed as regards the denial that appeared in the *Telegraph* of this city, I have the best of authority for stating that it did.

A great deal of wire-pulling is going on here over the corporation affairs, and as they will come before Parliament in a very exciting shape, early particulars will be interesting. The latest scandal is the deficit in the cash entrusted to the City Treasurer, which deficit amounts to some \$30,000. This together with the generally unsatisfactory condition of the city finances, has caused considerable stir among the citizens who have been holding caucus meetings, in some of which it has been resolved to request the Government to put the city into the hands of a commission, in others to adopt a system of cumulative voting, and give a vote for every \$500 invested; others again propose a council of ten, while there are others, I think the majority, who prefer to retain their present form, reducing the number of councillors by one from each Ward.

Many hot-headed people insist on blaming the present council for the condition of affairs in which the city now finds itself, when this body was only elected some twenty-one months since, whereas all the trouble originated during the reign of past councils. I heard rather a good story about this. It seems at one of the caucus meetings in which several gentlemen abused the present council, a late member rose, and slowly casting his eyes round said, "Gentlemen I see here fifteen ex-Aldermen and Councillors, I should like to hear from them, what they did

while in office, to prevent the present condition of affairs; for my part, I must cordially state that I did nothing." Not a single one besides himself said a word and the meeting broke up.

The great point at issue is "commission or no commission." A prominent Government supporter stated publicly he had been consulted as to who should be appointed on the commission, and he confessed he was unable to suggest any name. It will, I expect, resolve itself into a political question. The Conservatives want a commission when they will get the million dollars for the North Shore Road, the Liberals want no commission as they do not wish the grant to be paid. Notice has been given for an amendment to the city charter, so that when it comes before the Private Bills Committee we may look out for lively times.

Quebec possesses a new Skating Rink, which in character resembles the Victoria Rink, in your city. It was opened at the close of last month by the Lieutenant-Governor, and last week the first carnival (a sketch of which you have received) took place. It was a great success; the ice was crowded with skaters in every variety of costume; the rink was decorated (by volunteer decorators) and the whole affair proved so interesting that, although I did not know more than one of the participants, I remained till midnight, and found it amusing till that hour.

Perhaps you are not aware that the Telephone is in use here commercially. A jeweller on John street has a branch store in St. Rochs, and has connected them by means of this instrument. At first he found a difficulty in making it act satisfactorily, but setting his wits to work he has so improved it that now one can hear voices as clearly as though the speakers were in an adjoining room. He gave an exhibition of its power a few days since, and the result is that several banks and lumbermen have determined to adopt it.

The Eastern War is a subject that but few in this city have studied, but the other day while reading the papers at the Merchants' Exchange (thanks to the kindness of the manager who has given me *Cette Blanche*), I entered into conversation with a gentleman, who is a partner in a wealthy lumber firm doing business both here and at Montreal, and who has made it his hobby. He propounds a theory that is new to me, which is that in case of any trouble arising between the other European countries, Austria and France would join with Russia, against England, Germany, and Italy, between whom he argues a private understanding already exists. He is unusually well read on the subject for a city man, and his interest is so great that he goes to England shortly in order to be nearer the scenes so interesting to him.

At the last quarter sessions two notorious young men were tried for assaulting Colonel Collier on the evening of the day on which the election for Quebec East took place, by which assault the Colonel fell and broke his leg. One of the accused was convicted and sentenced to 12 months imprisonment, with hard labour. This fact contains but little significance, but some time ago Colonel Collier performed the difficult feat of running away with a steam engine, and it appears strange, to say the least of it, that Col. Collier's companion with whom he was walking at the time the assault occurred, should have been left untouched and have disappeared so soon as the assault commenced and did not even return to his hotel.

Quebec is at present enjoying an intellectual treat in the way of a Loan Art Exhibition, held at Morrin College, for a charitable purpose. It consists of two rooms, one hung with oil paintings and the other with water colours, and also containing a number of curiosities, statues, and bronzes, being in each room. The paintings are some Art Union pictures, others from the Royal Academies of London and Edinburgh, others again are by local artists, notably Kreighoff, Sewell, Miss Rowand, and others, while the names of Allan Duncan, Copley, Williams, Jordan, Mohert, Steffan, Devaria, and others are also to be found in the corners of several of the pictures. The pictures are, as a rule, well-hung, and many of them are of exceptional merit. I spent a couple of hours there yesterday morning, and would have stayed longer with pleasure, so interested was I in all I saw. The curiosities are many of them rare, a case of East Indian goods containing silver ornaments 200 years old, also some small idols, 600 years old. In another case is a copy of one of Corregio's pieces of sculpture and the largest elephant's foot I ever saw. It is mounted as a foot-stool and his toe-nails each are as large as my fist, and are highly polished. In another case is a copy of the Pall Mall Gazette, reduced in size, which was sent into Paris by carrier pigeon during the Franco-Prussian War besides a quantity of other curiosities too numerous to particularize.

Had there been more room there would have been more contributions, but as it is, the articles now there are insured en bloc for \$40,000, so it can be readily imagined the exhibition is well worth visiting.

The effect has been beyond the hopes of the organizers; the rooms are crowded, and from the numerous favourable opinions I have heard expressed by those who have attended, I have no doubt but that a public Art Loan Exhibition will be held, when a large number of gentlemen will be happy to contribute their treasures, especially when they find how high their generosity will be appreciated, and what incalculable benefit such an exhibition bestows on the public at large.

Several of the promoters have been asking me

what is being done in Montreal concerning the Beniah Gibb bequest. Of course I could only respond that a meeting had been held, at which resolutions were passed to do something and yet nothing had been done. They said, "Of course you have a small exhibition such as this every year." I was obliged to confess that Montreal had been without any Art Exhibition for over five years, and there did not seem to be any chance of her having one for another five.

Quebec is the only city in the Dominion (so they say here) that still keeps up a driving club, and it is no uncommon thing on a fine day to see half a dozen tandems with one four-in-hand driving through the streets occupied by gentlemen of Quebec and their "Muffins." Quebec has become accustomed to seeing this, but last Saturday pedestrians were surprised to see about forty or fifty wood sleighs occupied by young men, who were seated on empty candle-boxes, covered with buffalo robes. The leader contained two buglers, while the whipper-in had a grotesque "buttons" who wore a hat four times too large for him, with a burlesque cockade fastened on one of its sides. This procession, which I understand is to be continued weekly, created considerable amusement, it being evidently intended as satire on the Tandem Club. Though why the latter should be satirized is more than I can say. Its members are all gentlemen, and they have never yet made themselves in any way obnoxious to the public.

Politics once more. The House has resumed its sessions, and so far, have done nothing but routine work. A short discussion took place on the opening day, on a motion of Mr. Bellingham to submit all proposed loans to the municipal electors of the Province. It was a lame attempt to get any inkling of the Government policy, but Mr. Church told Mr. Bellingham he was very much mistaken in his man, and the motion was afterwards withdrawn.

The Treasurer has announced his Budget Speech for Wednesday next, so my third letter will expose that greatest of all mysteries, "what policy the Government intend to pursue."

I attended a debating club on Tuesday night, when the subject was Free Trade against Protection. The views on both sides were very well laid before the audience, who decided in favour of Protection for Canada. On Tuesday week the subject is likely to excite considerable interest; it is, "Is the present Federal Administration worthy of our support?" A lively debate is anticipated.

KRISS-KRINGLE.

ACALUS L. PALMER, Q.C., M.P.

This gentleman, who is perhaps the foremost barrister of St. John, is a son of Philip Palmer, Esq., of Sackville, N.B., who for many years sat with credit in the New Brunswick Legislature, and is descended from a loyalist family. He was born at Sackville, 25th Aug. 1820, and there educated. He was called to the Bar of New Brunswick in 1845, and after more than twenty years successful practice at Dorchester, returned to St. John, where he is more constantly engaged in the courts in important cases than almost any other barrister. He was for several years a member of the Council of the Barristers' Society of New Brunswick, and in 1867 was created a Queen's Counsel. Mr. Palmer was a supporter of Confederation and twice contested the County of Westmoreland for a seat in the New Brunswick Legislature in that interest, but without success. He was also an unsuccessful candidate for St. John city in the Local Assembly at the General Election in 1870. He was first returned as member of the County of St. John in the Dominion Parliament at the General Election in 1872 and was again elected in 1874. He was a supporter of the Government of Sir John A. Macdonald and is an opponent of the present administration. Although not a particularly fluent speaker, he is a very forcible one and is always heard with attention in the House. As a lawyer his attainments are of a very high order and his practice is very large and has been remarkably successful. Mr. Palmer is a large shipowner, and, although a very heavy loser by the fire, is a man of wealth. His elegant mansion on Queen's Square, which cost over \$30,000 was totally destroyed by fire, his office was also swept away and a remarkably valuable and complete law library. He also lost much other property, probably in all not less than \$70,000. His energy is equal to the occasion, and the manner in which he bears his losses and the earnest way in which he entered into the work of rebuilding, and organizing measures for the general good, are worthy of all praise.

EDWARD WILLIS, M.P.P.

EDWARD WILLIS was born in Halifax, N. S., on the 5th Nov. 1835, and educated in the National and Grammar Schools of that city. When 15 years of age he commenced to learn the printing business and continued to work at it until his removal to St. John, N. B., in 1854. He worked for some time in the office of Mr. G. W. Day, and subsequently with H. Chubb & Co., proprietors of the *Courier* newspaper, of which he became first foreman and then editor and general manager. He started a paper in Carleton, in 1856, under the title of the *Recorder* and also a Masonic Magazine. Here he continued to publish for nearly three years. Subsequently, after a fire, which destroyed a considerable quantity of his plant he removed his office to the east side of the harbour, and started the

British American, which lived but a little while. He then returned to his former position in the *Courier* office, and in 1863, when Mr. Fenety became Queen's Printer, he became editor of his paper, the *Morning News*, then a tri-weekly. In conjunction with Messrs. Smith & Davis he purchased the paper, but afterwards bought out his partners and remained sole proprietor until he began to aspire to political life, when Mr. Mott became a partner with him in the business and ownership of the *Morning News*. In 1867 Mr. Willis became a candidate for a seat in the Legislature as representative of the County of St. John, but was defeated. He was, however, elected in 1870, and again in 1874 returned on the Government ticket. When he first entered the Legislature Mr. Willis was a supporter of Mr. King's administration. A year later he went into opposition, but in 1872 he occupied a seat in the Government. In 1876 he differed from his colleagues with regard to the choice of a candidate for the city of St. John, resigned his seat in the Government, and now he is again in opposition.

Mr. Willis is an active member of several societies and is Grand Master of the Orange Association, which he led in procession through the streets of St. John, on the 12th July, 1876. He was a strong advocate of Confederation from the first, did what he could to aid in the establishment of free schools, and is now an advocate of Maritime Union. He was a heavy loser by the fire, his residence and place of business being both destroyed, but was well insured, and is again in his new place of business. Mr. Willis is a persistent advocate of whatever he takes in hand, and is a man of kindly impulses, and a favourite with those who know him best. He is a ready speaker, and by his addresses on temperance and other subjects is well known throughout the Province.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

DION BOUCAULT has just fitted up a new apartment at an expense of \$10,000. The torch room, all marble and precious stones, is described as a wonder of luxury and magnificence.

M. ALEXANDRE DUMAS has read at the Odéon his long expected piece, "Joseph Balsano." The reading, which lasted three hours and a half, produced an immense effect.

The Mayor of Philadelphia refused on the 23d to license any variety theatre for 1878. He said that he would abide by the decision of the Courts and if this should be adverse, he would close them all up.

MISS LOTTIE SARGENT, of Boston, is said to sing with equal ease, clearness and sweetness each of the four parts in a quartet. When she sings bass her voice cannot be distinguished from that of a man, and her high notes in soprano parts are equally strong and pure.

THE COAT WORN BY JOHN E. OWERS, as Nelson Shingle was purchased in Worcester Mass. Mr. Owes, while at a hotel, saw a man riding past on a load of wood, wearing the coat, and immediately called the man in and paid him his price for the garment.

ADELINA PATTI, accompanied by the tenor, Niccolini and servant, is travelling in Italy. A carriage, drawn by four horses, is her means of conveyance. She had intended to purchase the royal villa, Capotondo, but will not, on account of the bad condition of the road leading to it.

At the great international concerts which will be organized during the Exhibition, and which are to take place at the palace of the Trocadere, will be given a splendid "Requiem" by Berlioz. It was composed for the funeral of General Damrémont, and was executed by four orchestras playing together at the Hotel des Invalides.

HERR RICHARD WAGNER has announced to subscribers toward the proposed school of music which was to be established under his auspices at Bayreuth, that, owing to the want of funds, the school cannot be opened this new year. There is still some hope of opening it next year. Meanwhile, Herr Wagner proposes that a musical league, representing his peculiar school of music, should be founded. Should the project for establishing a school again fall in 1879, Herr Wagner proposes to bring out his new Opera, "Parsifal" for the benefit of subscribers, sooner than was originally intended, namely, in 1880.

All the signs point to a grand success by Gilmore's Band of sixty-five performers, who will next spring start for Europe to represent America in a musical tour. Every member has already paid in \$100, and they were they assessed themselves \$75 more per man. They also opened a subscription list to which there was a prompt subscription by sixteen members of \$100 each. Altogether the band will raise among themselves about \$10,000, and they count on generous spirited citizens to increase the amount to \$40,000.

LAWRENCE BARRETT thinks the "combination" system is doomed. Only one company of this kind, he says, has made any money this season, and that one is Kate Claxton's. Managers and stars see that their mutual interests lie in the failure of this system, and they will yet unite with such managers as F. W. Ballinger and McVicker of Chicago, in breaking it up. Mr. Barrett thinks that the experiment of lower rates of admission will not succeed; and says that salary lists must be reduced before it can be tried.

The following are some New York actors' salary per week: John Gilbert, \$175; Macgregor, \$160; E. M. Gordon, \$150; George Holland, \$40; Rose Coghlin, \$175; Katherine Rogers, \$175; Mme. Paulst, \$75; Ed. Holland, \$40; James O'Neil, \$125; Faora Morris, \$140; Charles Thorne, \$200; Chas. Fisher, \$225; J. H. Stoddart, \$125; Davidge, \$100; Harry Becker, \$250; McKee Rankin (when in stock), \$80; Clara Morris (when at Daly's), \$200; Coghlin (when at Daly's), \$250; Maud Harrison, \$80; Dom Goldthwaite, \$60; Linda Pratt, \$60; Bijou Heron, \$50.

NOTICE TO LADIES.

The undersigned begs respectfully to inform the Ladies of the city of country that they will find at his Retail Store, 198 St. Lawrence Main Street, the choicest assortment of Ostrich and Vulture Feathers, of all shades; also, Feathers of all descriptions. Repaired with the greatest care. Feathers Dyed as per sample, on shortest delay. Gloves Cleaned and Dyed Black only.

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