

Armed with these, we hurl defiance at the whole literary world; and we will go forth prepared to satisfy any ambitious foreigner we may meet that, however profound the depths of vituperation to which his countryman may descend in the indulgence of a rabid and irrestrainable personal hatred, he will be sure to find our beloved Province proudly established at the bottom of the pit.

This much at all events, the *Chronicle* has made clear—To travel first class at the public expense, to be lionized and liquored illicitly, to be feted, photographed, cheered, jeered, talked at, looked at, laughed at for weeks; to sit in council under a solemn engagement to preserve secret all its proceedings, and to make public and discuss those proceedings as soon as local political purposes may require; and finally to be brought back even as he went, a bilious if not a better man, these are the functions of a "DELEGATE TO THE CONFERENCE."

But he who, having business to transact with a number of gentlemen connected with this conference, coming from different provinces and rarely at other times assembled together, takes advantage of their presence in certain places—at such leisure as they may afford him—to lay before them the business he may have, this man—mark him well—has been "GHOSTING THE CONFERENCE!" The expression is certainly dramatically suggestive. Might not something be attempted in an amateur way and the proceeds applied to the foundation of a "home for dilapidated delegates?" If Mr Livesey will try his hand at Banquo's Ghost, we know where to find a Macbeth.

It is too much to expect that an age which has squandered its best energies with no good result upon the difficult problems of "ou est hamlet?" and "How's your poor feet?" could, of its own effort, have shed much light upon the far more perplexing enquiry—"Who caught the Ghost?" Poor Nazzleton when he felt the "Phantom hand" upon him, fairly enough in our thinking, thrust it into his pocket and kept himself impenetrably "dark." His "darkness," under the circumstances may possibly have been discreditable; but it was probably discreet and at all events, it was Egyptian. The man who caught the "Tarter" has written to his family. His letters, to be sure, are not very cheering nor is his description of his captive especially alluring; but his fate at least is cleared up and his friends are again at ease. But the man who "caught the ghost" parades his exploit in the morning papers! Nor was it in a country grave-yard that the capture was effected, nor in some wayside Inn or lonely hen-coop or other recognised resort of such visitors. The Ghost was taken fairly and in the open. "Caught," we are told, "clearly where he had no business to be."

We had never suspected that Mr. Livesey came to this country accredited by a social science congress which, weary of squabbling over existing forms of government and *blase* of the systems of antiquity were in despair of anything unusual turning up during the recess, and so despatched Mr. Livesey in hot haste to organize this pretty little prodigy, this dear little national anomaly, this independent dependency, in time for its dissection at their "next merry meeting." Nor do we believe even now that this gentleman's business lay with the conference as a body, or that it related in any way to the matter of their deliberation. "*Magna est veritas et prevalebit.*" It is getting late in the day for subterfuge and evasion. Conscience and Cocker are working with a will. And when the last trace of this memorable Canadian carousal has worn off and the poor deluded delegates awake to the true character of the work they have been doing, an indignant country must be calm and hear—not the candid confession of her misguided representatives, that they were danced and dined and champagneed into this business—but the awful, the ghastly avowal that these five unhappy men have been taken in and "Daredevil"—that the places in which the sin was thought out were "HAUNTED!"

Extracts.

THE EFFECTS OF NOVEL READING ON GIRLS.

MISS BRADDON'S new book, the "Doctor's Wife," will be put to one use which, we suspect, she did not anticipate. It is a severe blow administered by a novelist to her own department of literature. . . . The old household antipathy to novel-reading, which twenty years ago marked one-half of English society, has not

been so entirely suppressed as people who judge England by London are very apt to imagine. . . . On the whole the verdict must, we think, be in favour of the novels, though with more reserves than it is quite the fashion to make. The objection rests, we think, upon two assumptions, neither of which is more than partially sound.—that the evils produced by reading are confined to novels, and that there is no positive good to counter-balance the possible ill result. And exclusive system of reading is undoubtedly injurious to any half-disciplined mind. Give a girl of fifteen nothing but history for two or three years, and her judgment will become as distorted as if she had passed the time in reading the wildest romances. She will not, it is true, imagine heroes with yellow whiskers and wild words of worship, but she will invest historic personages with charms they never possessed grow enamoured of the great deeds occasionally performed, and consider no man worth anything but those who resemble the exceptional and over-coloured personage upon whom her mind has dwelt. It is as ill to long for Sir Philip Sidney as for Charles Lovelace. Miss Yonge in one of her books, we think the "Heir of Redclyffe," puts this effect very well when she makes her heroine sympathize strongly with a wild rage into which the hero puts himself because Charles I. is attacked. There are hundreds of girls in England who feel criticism on Charles Stuart as they feel criticism on their brothers, who believe that feeble, intriguing, Italianesque grandson of Rizzio to be a Paladin and a martyr. They may just as well worship John Halifax as their ideal Charles Rex. Exclusive reading of history is, in England at least, infrequent, but exclusive reading of theology is not, and its effect is at least as bad as that of the novels. There is nothing more pitiable in the world than the condition of an English girl nourished on the papalium provided in some household—on religious biographies, and tracts about the impulses, needs, and temptations of the soul, unable to move for fear of committing some sin, with a conscience debauched by confusion between things indifferent and things sinful, with a finger perpetually placed on her religious pulse. A woman may as well neglect all her duties while waiting for the hero with yellow whiskers as neglect them while waiting for the emotion which she believes will accompany conversion; had far better become discontented through hunger for the novelist's life than despairing because convinced she can never be forgiven by Heaven.—*Spectator.*

ENGLANDS COLONIES.

In the vast territory of British North America we have at least four prominent races—English, Scotch, Irish, and French, and probably a great many more. According to what we see on the Continent of Europe, we should expect that each of these races would have some idea of setting up for itself. In Europe, to be sure, English and Scotch live together pretty well as one people; but then the Scotch are in Canada much more numerous and influential in proportion than the Scotch in Great Britain. But the Irish, whom in Ireland we find it so impossible to content or satisfy, are not in Canada the least disposed to separate themselves from the rest of the community. In Europe nothing could be more distasteful to a considerable population of Frenchmen than to live under English Government; in Canada there is no trace that any such dissatisfaction exists.

This singular state of things may be traced, without much difficulty, to two very simple causes—a common fear and a common benefit. The presence of an exceedingly powerful neighbour is not always an advantage to a community; may, occasionally it may prevent worse evils than those it threatens. It is a standing pressure, like that of the atmosphere, and, like the atmosphere, has a tendency by that pressure to heal wounds and divisions. The presence of a common fear makes men pliable and indulgent in their dealings with each other, and teaches them to be content with something very far short of absolute perfection. This in these critical days is no trifling advantage. There is no doubt we should hear much more of the jargon of "nationalities in our North American provinces were it not for the threatening neighbourhood of the United States. The common benefit is the influence of English laws, customs, and literature, and the solid advantages which the colonies derive from their connection with this country. As soon as they are menaced by an over-powerful neighbour they remember with pleasure that they are a dependency of the British Crown which it is bound to support in war. The same cause which draws them closer to each other draws them also closer to us.

The spectacle is very gratifying to our natural pride, and ought to be very instructive, since it shows how far it is possible for a steady course of just and fair dealing to neutralize the most violent antipathies, and how much better, after all, men can be governed by the plain and obvious considerations of material well-being than by sentimental and genealogical affinities. We have contrived to make the British connection as a matter of business and plain common sense, preferable in the eyes of the colonists to any other that can be offered, and we reap our reward in the most gratifying assurances of loyalty and attachment. Indeed, the only fault we have to find is that we have succeeded a little too well. Our colonists are rather too fond of us, and embrace us, if anything, a little too closely. They are so fond of their old nurse that we can hardly persuade them to attempt to go alone; they are like the child in the ever new simile of Homer, that is perpetually clinging to the robe of its mother and asking her to take it up in her arms. It is in vain that we preach to them the necessity of good exertions and sacrifices on their own part, if they would preserve the union with us which they so much desire, to avoid the absorption which they so utterly abhor. They have a confidence, equally overweening in us and in themselves. As for us, they have brought themselves to believe that our interests are nearly much involved in their own in the question of union, and that stripped of her