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Current Events.

THE WEEK.

The nominations which took place on Thursday last passed off without unusual excitement. The candidates and supporters on both sides displayed that large degree of confidence as to the result which is usually considered indispensable on such occasions. On the hustings the Government speakers stoutly maintained that the Premier's course in dissolving the House without calling it together, was correct, by reason of the corrupt practices resorted to in the last general election, from which it was to be assumed, that many of the late members owed their seats to foul means, and were not the free choice of the electors; that the promise of the present ministry to practice purity in administration was sufficient to entitle them to a fair trial by the country as against the party who supported the late ministry; and that if any other declaration of policy were necessary, such policy was sufficiently indicated by the Premier in his speeches at Sarnia and Hamilton. With respect to the charge made against the purity of the late House, it is of course based upon the fact of large sums of money having been spent at the late elections. The fact of the money having been spent is not denied, and the ministry is entitled to the benefit of the admission. But we do not see how the fact justifies the assumption that the former House was impure. All the constituencies in the Dominion elected members on that occasion and it has never been shown that any specific sum was spent in any particular constituency. Besides, the House now charged with impurity is the same that condemned the corruption denounced, and upon that ground alone turned out the former Government, and put in the present one. It seems difficult to see how the ministry can reasonably impute corruption to the assembly that put them in office for the only reason that their hands were supposed to be cleaner than those of the men who were thus supplanted by the action of that assembly. We confess there seems to be some force in the objection that there is a want of clearness in the issue upon which the appeal to the country is rested. The one prominent question put before the electors by the Government supporters is the Pacific Railway Scandal. But that question was decided by the late House. If that House had been called together we believe it would have done their duty to give the Cabinet a fair trial, and support their measures if meritorious. We do not see how the House could have done otherwise without a senseless revocation of their verdict against the late Government. We certainly hope that the punishment inflicted upon the late ministry, will have a warning influence against the repetition of improper practices on either side in the present elections. We may remark however that the same election law governs now as was then in force. While the law remains as it is, we are apprehensive that efforts more or less illegitimate will be made in the excitement of the contest, notwithstanding general exhortations to men to be honest in their election practices, even although we observe that such exhortations have come from certain Christian Pulpits. The great point is to change the law by making corruption penal; and it seems to us a great misfortune that the proposed alteration in the election law had not been made to precede the general election.

The election last week at Ottawa of a member of the local legislature resulted in a defeat of the Government candidate by a majority of over 580, and the election of Mr. O'Donoghue who ran as the workingmen's candidate and received the support of the Conservatives although not nominated by the Conservative Association.

President Grant has had much trouble in suiting the popular taste in the selection of a Chief-Justice. The difficulty brings into prominent view some of the evils of those points in the American system wherein it differs from the English, one of which points is an irresponsible executive. In England (as in Canada), the Cabinet (which has the power to appoint as well as to nominate) is directly responsible to Parliament, and can at any time be removed by a hostile vote of the Commons. That responsibility has in general been found sufficient to secure really good as well as popular appointments to office. In the States the executive is not responsible to Congress, and Cabinet ministers are independent of that body. But as to the principal government offices, including the Chief Justice and other

Judges of the Supreme Court, the executive can only nominate—the Senate must confirm or reject. In the present instance, the President has not been fortunate in the difficult matter of meeting the popular judgment. In the first place Attorney-General Williams was nominated, but strange to say, if we are to believe some of the American papers, his rejection by the Senate proceeded principally on the ground of the unpopularity of his wife. Next the Honourable Caleb Cushing was nominated; who, although at present a sound Republican, and admitted to be an able lawyer, failed to secure confirmation by reason of his former leaning to the Southern Confederacy. The third nomination is Mr. Waite, of Ohio, who is described as a lawyer of good, though not first class abilities. He is generally popular, and it is thought his confirmation will be secured. He was one of the counsel entrusted by the American Government with the argument of their case at the Geneva Arbitration.

As an illustration of the influence of the press we may refer to the recent action of Congress, in rescinding their vote of last session giving members an increase of salary with retrospective operation. The vote of last session, which has been known in the States as the "back salary grab," created a perfect storm of indignation from the press, the effect of which is now seen.

The marriage of the Duke of Edinburgh which took place at St. Peter'sburgh on the 22nd instant, is now the great topic in English social circles. The event has naturally suggested discussions as to the relations between England and Russia—past, present and future. The non interference of England in the recent Russian conquests in the East, is apparently a reversal by England of the policy which in 1858 led her into the Crimean war. Critics are not wanting who place this change of policy and the Royal marriage in juxtaposition and suggest significant inferences. It is considered by men who are in a position to judge, that the influence of the Queen and Royal family upon the foreign policy of England is much greater than is generally supposed.

In Ireland the Prayer Book revision controversy is still maintained. We are glad to observe, however, that the tone of the controversy has changed for the better. The discussion is carried on with less bitterness and more calmness than at first. There seems to be a growing desire on the part of the Revisionists to conciliate the defenders of the Prayer Book. On the other hand a considerable number of both clergy and laity have formed what may be termed a middle party who are willing to concede the principle of revision, but contend that it should be sparingly applied, and that it must not extend to matters of faith or doctrine. In regard to the sweeping changes originally proposed, there is evidently a great reaction of sentiment, and there is now little probability of such changes being effected. What may ultimately be done is still open to much uncertainty. Whatever changes may, however, be carried, we are confident they will be marked by a cautious and conservative spirit, and that the Irish Church will be careful to avoid any step that would likely lead to the separation of her communion from that of the Church of England.

In the French Assembly the strength of the Government has been tested on a motion to give the Government the right of nomination of Ministers which was carried by a majority of forty-three votes. The effect of this is to place in the hands of the executive a very considerable means of controlling popular action. Nothing could be a more significant blow at the principle of municipal self-government. If the Republic is destined to last even the seven years for which McMahon has been voted President, everything seems to indicate that the rule of the President will be, in some respects, more arbitrary than that of the Kings in the Antirevolutionary times. We believe that a strong Government is the only one practicable for France; but the anomaly consists in maintaining a form under which the people are supposed to govern themselves, when in reality popular self-government is unknown.

The French Government have had some difficulty in keeping clear of entanglement in the German-Papal contest. The action of certain French Bishops on the frontier has given offence to Prussia, which power has addressed to the French Government a remonstrance which has provoked the bitter comments of the French press. The French Executive have declared in the assembly that France desires the welfare and

spiritual independence of the Pope, but wishes to maintain relations of peace and harmony with Italy.

From Germany news comes that the Ultramontane Bishops are "packing their trunks," preparatory to a general leave taking in the coming spring. Indeed we would not be surprised if many actually would abandon the scene of their struggle with the Civil Power of Prussia. The Bishops are certainly placed in an uncomfortable position. Feeling themselves bound by every obligation as well as inclination to obey the Pope, they can scarcely take a single step in the direction of that obedience without rendering themselves obnoxious to Prussian law, and liable to penal action.

The meeting of the International Postal Congress at Berlin, which is announced to take place on the 12th October next, is looked forward to with much interest. Results favourable to a uniform low rate of European and American Postage are hopefully anticipated.

The dissolution of the English Parliament upon the advice of Mr. Gladstone, has taken the country by surprise. The London Post declares it very much resembles a *coup d'état*. In his address to his constituents at Greenwich, Mr. Gladstone states as his principal reason for this course, the opposition of the Irish Prelate and the failure to carry the act respecting higher education in Ireland. He virtually admits that the several objections which have taken place during the recess, have materially damaged the Government and made it too weak to carry important measures through the late House. Mr. Disraeli has issued his address asking re-election, in the course of which he imputes the dissolution to a desire on the part of Mr. Gladstone to avoid the confession that he has occupied a seat for several months to which he was not entitled, or else an attempt to evade the consequences of going into the Ashante War without any communication to Parliament. He also criticises the financial policy of the Premier so far as indicated. The probability is the country is now ripe for a change of ministry and that the dissolution of the House may be taken as a confession of the weakness of the present ministry, not only in the late House, but in the country. The new House to be elected is summoned to meet on the fifth of March next.

The report of the sudden death of Dr. Livingstone will be received with painful regret. The event so long looked for when the great traveller should return home, to give an account of his enterprise, is after all not to take place. From the tenor of the unwelcome news, we fear it is too true. He is said to have died in the interior of Africa from an attack of dysentery; and that his body has been embalmed and is being taken to England by way of Zanzibar. His death will be a great blow to the cause of Science. He had done much to solve the great problem of the interior of Africa, and has furnished invaluable materials to facilitate the operations of any successor who may have the ambition to undertake the completion of the rough and dangerous task.

Eccelesiastical.

The rumor respecting the intended resignation of the Bishop of St. David's, England, is revived. Dr. Thirlwell has held the Bishopric since 1840.

On January ninth Cardinal Bona parte and his relatives had 500 masses said in the principal churches of Rome for the repose of the soul of Napoleon III.

The Rev. William Sparrow, D. D., Dean of the faculty of the Alexandria Theological Seminary, Virginia, for the past thirty-three years, died suddenly at the First National Bank of Alexandria, last Saturday morning, in the seventy-third year of his age.

In Ireland Father O'Keefe announces that all his five schools have again been taken into connection by the Board, with the consent of all parties interested. The Commissioners have awarded off action by paying £10 salary to a monitor in one of the schools.

The collection for domestic missions in Grace Church, New York, on Sunday fortnight, after addresses by the Rector (Dr. H. O. Potter) and the Rev. Dr. Irving, was very nearly \$8,000. The Epiphany collection at the Church of the Holy Communion, New York, amounted to \$1,500.

A writer in *Notes and Queries* remarks that the Archbishop of Canterbury had not received any D. D. degree before 1800. He was a D. C. L., and this is the degree of the present Bishop

of Salisbury. It seems to be generally supposed that Bishops always possess the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

The usual annual meeting of the Bishops at Lambeth Palace was convened this year, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, somewhat earlier than usual, —the day fixed upon being Tuesday, the 13th day of January. A variety of important measures was to come before them for preliminary discussion, being closely connected with the work of Convocation, as well as parliament. The *Record* specifies one "measure of reform" as "chiefly affecting the Ecclesiastical Courts and fees,"—proposing improvements less sweeping than Lord Shaftesbury's, and dealing more gently with the existing powers and patronage of the Bishops.

The Rev. W. R. Huntington, D. D., by special invitation of Dr. Peabody, Pastor of Harvard University Massachusetts gave a lecture in Appleton Chapel before the students, on Sunday evening, January 11th. His subject was Free Religion, and the discourse was an attempt to state and meet upon the ground of common-sense and reasonable statement the positions taken by the present unbeliever. It was an excellent analysis, if not a complete refutation of free-thinking, the strong point of the discourse being the presentation of the difficulties which the free-thinkers are compelled to meet, if they are to give a complete statement of the facts of human life. It is a fact of some interest, that in the same month the same Church Clergyman is to appear in the College Chapels of both Harvard and Yale; it has never before happened in the history of the American Church, and is a sign of the times.

A Paris correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, writing on December 24th, says: "It has been for many centuries the custom in the Roman Catholic Church, on the death of a Cardinal, to suspend his hat from the vault of the metropolitan chapel, behind the chancel altar. This hat remains there until the nomination of a New Cardinal, when it is taken down with great ceremony and placed in the treasury. It is only necessary to count the number of hats to see how many Cardinals have succeeded each other in Paris. All these symbols are carefully preserved. The hat of the last Cardinal of Paris was that of Monsignor Morlot, and it has now been placed in the treasury in the same chest with the blood-stained surcoats of Monsignors Afre, Sibour, and Darboy. The treasury of the Cathedral of Cambrai still possesses the hat of the famous Cardinal Dubois, and also a pastel of that prelate, both covered with crapes, for the intimate friend and Minister of the Regent of Orleans was hardly a respectable Churchman. As for the hat of the last Cardinal of Cambrai, it was destroyed by fire when the cathedral was burned down about fifteen years ago. The consequence is, that there is no hat at Cambrai to be displaced, owing to the elevation of the Archbishop of that place."

The *Churchman* of the 24th inst., has the following:—The prediction that Prince Bismarck will be the means of effecting, in Roman Catholic Germany, a religious reformation like that under Henry VIII. in England, shows some likelihood of fulfilment. It is plain that he does not mean to draw back, and that he will use every resource at his command to bring the refractory Bishops under the power of the laws. The one all-important element, however, the disposition of the Roman Catholic population is not yet manifest. The recent elections have shown that the Ultramontanes are not giving way, but strengthening themselves to the utmost; and if the Government wins a victory, it will not be an easy one. The fact that the dogmas of infallibility has been so generally accepted by the Roman Catholics in Germany, and that no Bishop and very few Priests have taken a stand of open opposition to it, and to the arrogant claims of the Papacy, give at first sight the appearance of unanimity. This is the inference which the Roman Catholic journals draw, and wish others to draw. See, they say, how united are all the members of the Church in defence of the Pope, and of his prerogative! How can any Government hope to overcome the multitudes of the faithful thus acting together! But is this unity real or only by seeming? Does the spirit of faith and obedience truly rule in them, prompting them to every sacrifice? We very much question this. The very readiness with which the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and of Infallibility have been received, seem to show a supineness and indifference which augur ill for the faith of the so-called believers.

Miscellaneous.

The ladies of Havre are about to erect a colossal statue of the Virgin, to commemorate the escape of that city from Prussian invasions.

The German Minister of War has ordered the immediate destruction of the fortifications of Cologne, and the erection of a new girdle of forts round that city.

A peculiar type of spotted fever rages in and around Carrollton, Illinois, and from it there has thus far been but a single recovery. The physicians are puzzled.

A telegram from Rome says: It is highly probable that an English prelate will be appointed Cardinal at the second Consistory, which is to be held at Easter.

Special prayers were offered up on Christmas Day in the garrison churches throughout the United Kingdom for the officers and men engaged in the Ashantee expedition.

Some stir has been created at Paris by the appearance of a pamphlet in which the idea is put forward that the Prince Imperial is not too young to reign, and that he ought to be called to his father's throne.

Experiments recently made in England with the Grantham steam car have proved so satisfactory that one of the London tramway companies is about to adopt the use of it provided the necessary permission can be obtained.

Fogs seem to be prevalent about this time all over the world. Paris has had three days of thick, dismal fog, and the people there regret a loss to understand what it means. Vienna, and Berlin have been regularly afflicted of late.

Victor Emmanuel was thrown into state of great alarm by the news of the recent dangerous illness of his newly ally, Emperor William. He telegraphed to Berlin for particulars as soon as he heard of the Emperor's illness, and directed that daily reports of his condition should be forwarded to him by telegraph.

A writer in *Macmillan's Magazine*, describing Spanish life and character in 1873, asserts that in some of the large towns having thirty thousand inhabitants, there is not a single book store to be found, the only books, and these chiefly of a religious kind, being procured but once a year in the annual fairs.

The public debt of Italy amounts to \$1,000,000,000. The annual deficit has been less lately than in former years. Looking back for a period of thirteen years, there has been a deficit every year, varying from \$120,000,000, the greatest, in 1860, to \$27,000,000, the least, in 1873.

An American paper is responsible for the following:—The Duke of Edinburgh has been appointed a Colonel in the Prussian army. This is the first instance on record of an English Prince obtaining a Prussian commission. English Princes have been honorary Colonels, but Prince Alfred is the first who has ever really held a Colonel's rank in the army.

According to the report of Consul General Abbot from Odessa, the condition of the peasantry in Kherson is so reduced that many families have not clothing sufficient for all their members in a district where the climate is of intense rigor in winter. The poor people, under these circumstances, have put upon the expedient of wearing their garments by turns.

According to the "Lady Correspondent" of the *Belfast News Letter*, for a long time after the death of the Prince Consort Her Majesty could not bear to touch a piano; nor did she even allow one to be opened in her presence. Now she has resumed her old accomplishment, and plays duets with her last remaining daughter, the Princess Beatrice. By Royal command, M. Gounod has arranged some of the music of *Jeanne d'Arc*, as a duet for two performers on one piano, for the Queen and her daughter.

It appears that the London *Notes and Queries* is subjected to the same trials which sometimes beset the path of American editors and composers. It prints a "notice" to its correspondents which gives evidence, in its closing sentence, of the mental distraction of which it must have been the fruit. It says: "Our correspondents will, we trust, excuse our suggesting to them, both for their sakes as well as our own, that they should write clearly and distinctly—and on one side of the paper only—more especially proper names, and words and phrases of which an explanation may be required. We cannot undertake to puzzle out what a correspondent does not think worth the trouble of writing plainly."