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CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, August 4th, 1877.

THE FIRST GREAT BATTLE.

The first pitched battle of the Eastern war has been fought, and has resulted in an overwhelming Turkish victory. The event is a notable one in a twofold point of view—as bearing upon the protraction of the campaign, and as exhibiting the relative merits of the conflicting armies. The Russians were very dilatory after crossing the Pruth, delaying several months in Roumania, before attempting the passage of the Danube, but after accomplishing that feat, with little or no resistance, their movements were marked with the qualities of dash and celerity. Rutschuk on the left wing was vigorously besieged by the Czarowitch; Nikopolis on the right was vigorously bombarded and finally captured, while the centre pushed forward under the Grand Duke NICHOLAS himself, who established his headquarters at Tirnova, the ancient Bulgarian capital, under the shadow of the Balkans. The advance guard under General Gourko drove forward through the mountain passes and occupied several important points within sixty miles of Adrianople. Meantime the Turks remained so quiescent that the suspicion of their inability to check the Russian advance was loudly expressed in several of the leading European journals, and the

conclusion was drawn that the Muscovites would end the war in a single campaign by a triumphant march on Constantinople. But suddenly a change took place in the Ottoman tactics. The supreme command was withdrawn from ABDUL KERIM and confided to MEHEMET ALI, and a difference was at once made manifest. A number of strategical and tactical movements along the whole line shewed that the new Turkish Commander-in-Chief was developing a regular plan of operations which, beginning with a repulse of the CZAROWITCH on his right, a stubborn resistance by SULEIMAN PASHA, at Karabunar, at his centre, culminated on the left with the great victory of Plevna, under the immediate direction of OSMAN PASHA. The effect seems to be that the hopes of a Russian triumph in a single summer campaign are effectively thwarted, and that, unless they immediately recover their losses by a stunning defeat of OSMAN PASHA, they cannot expect to operate south of the Balkans before autumn, when the impassable condition of the roads will render their movements very difficult.

The battle of Plevna likewise gives us a glimpse of the true condition of the Turkish army. It has been generally allowed that the men are thoroughly reliable, especially when fighting on the defensive, but it was not supposed that the officers were effective. The contrary is now shown to be the fact, and it would appear that, except in numbers, the army of the Sultan is not inferior to that of the Czar. It is of course too early to lay down opinions or institute comparisons, but up to the present the Pashas MOUKHTAR, SULEIMAN, OSMAN and MEHEMET have given proof of such generalship as has not been surpassed by their adversaries.

The next week or two will be marked by stirring events. The Russians are hurrying forward reinforcements, even the Imperial Guard being ordered to the front, and every effort will be made to retrieve their disasters and rehabilitate their prestige. On the other hand, the Turks have just warmed to their work, are flushed with success and seem to be acting with a systematic purpose. While both armies are still comparatively fresh, the onset will be terrible and the result dubious. Later on, if Turkey remains unaided, she may have to succumb to the force of overwhelming numbers, as other and better nations, in both hemispheres, have done before her.

THE LACROSSE CONVENTION.

The annual meeting of the National Lacrosse Association which took place in this city on the 3rd inst., was of unusual interest from the large number of delegates present and the important decisions arrived at. At no time has the national game of Canada been in so flourishing a condition as at present, numerous new clubs having been formed in all the Provinces, and thanks to the visit of the double teams to England last year, the sport having rapidly spread throughout Great Britain and even in India. The present meeting of the Association was therefore looked forward to with more than ordinary anxiety, as it was necessary to consolidate the game, systematize and simplify its essential rules, and lay down the basis of a code that would ensure harmony for all time to come. In many respects the labors of the Convention were successful, but we regret to notice that some ill-feeling was engendered by the question of championship. That was a point which had remained too long in abeyance, and it was imperative that it should be settled, before almost anything else could be accomplished. The award of that honor to the Shamrocks always appeared to us a foregone conclusion, and it is a source of gratification that the Convention did its duty in the premises, though there was not that unanimity which might prevent future recrimination. Indeed, from what took place, the question might arise whether it would not be wiser to abandon the practice of champion

matches to professionals exclusively, as is the case with the base ball clubs in the United States. Athletic sports in Canada have always been maintained in the English spirit of high gentility, and it would be a pity that a morbid rivalry should bring in the vulgarities of betting, umpire-challenging, quarrelling and general ill-feeling. If this were allowed, most of the older clubs and many of the newer ones would withdraw gradually from the field, and the result would be the decadence of our national game. We may furthermore express the hope that the dissatisfaction manifested last week at the action of the Convention may not lead to a schism, as is at present threatened. If one association cannot regulate the operations of Lacrosse, it is difficult to see how two could effect that object, and if the principle of rebellion to regularly delegated authority is once recognized, there is no telling where it may end. After reflection and consultation, we believe that all the recalcitrants will join in maintaining the homogeneity and influence of the National Association. This is essential to the existence of Lacrosse. Even if mistakes have been made, it is better to await patiently the remedial processes of time. Where a spirit of conciliation and unselfish devotion to the game is maintained, there is no reason to fear that substantial injustice will be done to any club, or to any member of any club, in the Dominion. Several of the new rules adopted by the Convention for the formation of clubs and the regulation of matches were very commendable. Punctuality in beginning games at the advertised hour, and a strict observance of the time-interval between the games, should perhaps have been more insisted upon. No later than last Saturday, the violation of these two rules on the Montreal Lacrosse grounds gave great dissatisfaction to the public. Hereafter, according to the new rule, a match shall be decided by the winning of the greatest number of goals in two full hours' play, goals to be changed at the end of each game and not more than five minutes being allowed during such game.

THE REFORMER PRESIDENT.

The course which is being pursued by the present incumbent of the White House is perhaps the wisest that he could have chosen, in view of the exceptional circumstances by which he was inducted into the Chief Magistracy of the United States. While it is generally allowed that he was elected according to a strictly legal interpretation of the law, it is still apparent to every body, and to perhaps none more than to Mr. HAYES himself, that a shadow of suspicion hangs over his administration which must stand in the way of that spontaneous and universal sympathy to which his well-meant conduct would otherwise entitle him. In other words, he has an immense prejudice to contend against, which even his most successful efforts at reform may be powerless to dissipate. It was politic as well as patriotic of him therefore to attempt to reduce this obstacle to a minimum, by endeavoring to break away altogether from the shackles of party tradition, and address himself to questions of mere administration, which soar high above all party, as affecting directly the good of the whole commonwealth. That he is freeing himself from party dictation was evidenced at the very outset by the highly satisfactory manner in which he dealt with the terrible problems of the South, enacting elementary justice, even at the risk of inconsistency to the very principles which won him the Presidency, and at the peril of disorganizing his own party in the Southern States. Similarly his mode of attacking the crucial question of Civil Service Reform is proof of his desire to replace partisanship by a broad national policy. Judging as outsiders, however, we have our fears that he will not be so successful here as in the case of the rival governments of Louisiana and South Carolina. Civil Service Reform, as understood and practiced in Great Britain, goes very much farther than the prohibi-

tion of active partisanship among the salaried officers of the State. Indeed, that is only a corollary to a system which, from its initial stages, and through all its subsequent grades, effectually removes such officers from all participation in elections, the only exception being the casting of the voter's ballot. We question very much, in the first place, whether it is in the power of the President to carry out his recent order, knowing, as we do, the temper of the American people and the peculiar "independence" of the ubiquitous class of office-holders, and, in the second place, it may be made a point of serious doubt how far he has the right to enforce such an order, if interpreted in its strictest sense and pushed to its furthest logical conclusions. It is best to leave time to decide these two points. If they turn in the President's favor, the effect will add largely to his prestige. If they prove against Mr. HAYES, his unpopularity, especially in his own party, will be so great that we should not be surprised to hear even Republicans throw out regretful hints that he was ever allowed into the White House. It is not, we opine, such amiable theorists as even Messrs. EVARTS and SCHURZ, having the ear of the President, who can give the death-blow to the admittedly widespread corruption of American official life; but the patient labors of Congress will be required to devise such a plan of careful training, competitive examination, regular promotion, adequate salaries and graduated pensions, as has made the Civil Services of England and France, for instance, a career to which the ablest and best men of those countries have been proud to attach themselves.

We have learned from the most reliable authority that the accident at the Quebec Skating Rink, to which we referred last week, was caused solely from the guys being slackened and the trusses of the roof standing without any protection. Not being built into walls, a light wind would blow them over. As to their solidity, they are much stronger than is absolutely necessary, so as to allow of wounding the timbers by bolt holes, &c. The roof, when completed, with the wind braces provided to be put in, will be perfectly secure, but in its present exposed state requires to be well guyed and stayed. The roof principals of a church in Montreal, similarly situated, blew down last summer during construction, but now all is completed, and is very strong and perfectly secure. The building is now going on according to the original plans, and with every attention to solidity and endurance. From the information we have received, there need not be the slightest apprehension as to its security, the character of the architect and of the gentlemen forming the directorate of the company, being sufficient guarantee that the public safety has, and will be made, the object of their constant care.

MR. BRIGHT is humiliated at the present condition of public affairs in the United States. He attributes all to the Tariff. It is either the Tariff or something else. But we should have thought Mr. BRIGHT was getting almost old enough to have begun to overhaul his democracies to look at the various men who compose them; also at the progressive history of the relations of Labour and Capital, the motives of demagogues, an exciting climate, and the absence of checks. And without discussing elementary forms, he will doubtless now see that the immense organized properties in railways have to be guarded by national and centralized justice and power—such as need moral sense, coolness, and knowledge to administer. He is a good man, and not ignorant of the gospel of peace and good will, without which society cannot be saved—and he is doubtless reconciled to the study of politics only by the improvements he still trusts to initiate or promote in them.