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### CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, May 19th, 1877.

#### THE SITUATION IN EUROPE.

The threatened division of the Liberal party in England, as a result of the present European complications, should by every effort be averted. We must all take care not to go too fast in forming conclusions about the duty of the coming time. By England at the present moment there is very little to be done. She has a desire—a Christian as well as a politic desire—to maintain the peace of her Empire and of the world, and to promote the welfare of the populations. These are great objects, and social discord ought not to result from them. The question is more momentous than all party issues. After every effort of diplomatic skill, notes and protocols have ceased for the moment to be of any avail in improving the general position. Now comes the hour of patience. Any extension of the area of strife is most undesirable at present. The condition and policy of the Christians of the Principalities has to be watched, and the avenues to India and the East have to be maintained. The Indian Empire is not threatened at present. Under God, the bulwark of that empire consists in its cordon of mountains fronting the aggressor. But with a natural solicitude for the future, we may be allowed to ask if England can reasonably contemplate alliances. Getting into a fume at home will not bring alliances, but rather keep them away. France and Germany may not be yet as cordial towards each other as might be wished. Austria dreads a Panslavic movement, where she might rely upon generous sympathies with well-disposed if somewhat uncultivated populations, and all the powers are conscious of the exhaustion and the menace of armaments, and are fearing change. Otherwise, a programme might be forthcoming at some early day. But between the combatants themselves mediation is out of the question amid the clash of arms. The attitude of England thus becomes one of watchfulness and of readiness, and if there be anxiety, there will not be trepidation. A moment of exhaustion for the two autocratic or "mission" powers may arrive, in which the word of reason may be again possible. Let us not be too ready to overleap the duty of the hour to embrace new situations in our rapid thinking and

unnecessary vivacity. In contemplation only, let us at present see that the four great powers now at peace, along with their friendly sympathisers, may yet be called upon to express themselves, and find themselves perhaps saying: "We are giving strength to these Principalities. We are using all proper influences to civilize and protect them, and to give them importance. We have no intentions but for their welfare, and can unite with any who will promote it without aggression and self-seeking. We are taking up a new attitude, because former representations have proved unavailing. Restless protector, and restless persecutor, we have to urge upon you both to cease this perilous strife, and to respect the union of civilized powers. For ourselves we are liberal States, if we are conservative of what is good. We do not make the peace of Europe a question of creed, but only of right and duty. Autocracy does not enter into our economies. We are trying to do justice to our own peoples, who are patriotic and advancing in freedom. In mutual alliance, in view of this grave conjuncture, we are now asserting the peace of Europe, and before it is still further infringed upon by any power, we shall have to demand the reasons that could justify such perpetuation of dangers."

#### THE SEASON'S BOATING—ANOTHER WORD.

We must have another word to say upon this social question, as the opportunity for discussing it does not always occur. Some of our young friends advocate other forms of ballast for rowing and sail boats than that we described. They speak of water-ballast and sand-ballast. The former, being water—in tight bags—strapped into the boat, will add nothing to the weight of the vessel if water-logged, while iron would add something to such weight. Sand bags they say could easily be thrown overboard. Now, as long as you can keep the water out of the vessel, you do not want to throw your ballast overboard, and the fault of both these forms of ballast is that they are apt to shift their position in the bilge of the boat, in which case they tend to bring her over on one side. Water ballast may be carried in such water-proof bags as we speak of, tightly strapped in place, or in a longitudinal water-tight chest. These must be always full, or the water will roll and there is some danger of this point not being constantly secured, to say nothing of the chances of puncture. Outside of the question of the floating power of a water-logged craft, fixed ballast is the best element of stability. A boat with only a proper freight of persons on board ought to be made free from the danger of swamping or capsizing, and when we are ordering or purchasing a boat, it is better to think a little of safety than the saving of some paltry sum in the cost of the vessel. And if we would have a water-tight compartment at each end of the little vessel, nothing could be found more simple or feasible. This will make a life-boat of her, if otherwise well built and found, and will far more than qualify any amount of fixed ballast she may carry. The half-decked fishing boats of the eastern coast of Great Britain have a reputation for encountering seas. Even they might be improved, but their special merit consists in their possessing a hollow space in which the crew can sit, instead of being perched upon the deck, thus favorably lowering the centre-of-gravity of the boat and freightage. Their large locker or cabin is a security, and would be a still greater one, if its water-tight quality could always be relied upon, as it could then act the part of a fish bladder—and secure buoyancy. But our idea of a safe boat would be one in which there was an open space in the middle, with the seats for passengers, and well secured lockers or compartments fore and aft. If the compartments are to be made absolutely water-tight they would of course have to be distinct from the lockers or cabins. This question of safety in boating is too

important, and too much bound up with the peace and progress of families, to need any further apology for keeping it under the notice of our readers.

THERE are serious differences between the Turkish Chamber and the Government. The Chamber is very angry at the Porte's acceptance of the German protectorate over Russian subjects in Turkey. It also desires to impeach NOVAZ PASHA, the Sultan's brother-in-law, for embezzlement, and REDIFF PASHA, War Minister, for maladministration. REDIFF, who is all powerful, is determined to crush Parliament before it can harm him. The Porte wanted to proclaim a state of siege in Constantinople so as to be able to close Parliament, but it is now satisfied that it can close Parliament without resorting to such measures.

We have a favor to ask of our friends who adopt the suggestion for ballasting their open pleasure boats, and it is that they will carefully note the increase draught resulting from such ballasting after it is effected, and then take measures to have so much additional bulwark added to the sides and end of the boat, so as to make the number of inches of freeboard the same as before the ballasting. If the boat should need it, still additional freeboard can be added. In this way no reduction will be made in freeboard, even for the sake of stability, the importance of which latter quality we need not now dwell further upon. There will be no harm in saying, here, that the new ballast should not only be made to fit into the hollow of the boat, but should also be so firmly clamped that it cannot possibly shift under any movement to which the hull may be subjected—for shifting ballast would represent a new danger. As Parliament has not prescribed a load-line for pleasure boats, amateurs should consult their boatbuilder about carrying out this important safeguard against overloading. The nicest way to arrange this is by painting the outside in two colours, the upper one forming a broad belt which would represent the smallest admissible freeboard.

A MEETING of the executive committee of the Canadian Press Association was held last week, at which the time and route of this year's excursion was decided on. Wednesday, the 1st of August, was fixed upon as the date of the annual meeting, which will be held in Montreal, at 11 a.m. On the invitation of the Premier, the party will then proceed on a trip over the Government system of railways in the Maritime Provinces. They will start by boat from Montreal on Wednesday, and proceed to Quebec, thence to Shediac, from which point they will cross over to Prince Edward Island, and take a trip over the railways of that Province. They will then proceed to Pictou to visit the coal mines of that place; thence to Halifax and Londonderry, and then over the Annapolis and Windsor Railroad to St. John, N. B.; thence to Fredericton, returning to St. John; whence they will start home via the Intercolonial, returning on Saturday, the 11th of August.

A SLIGHT difficulty has arisen between France and England relative to the Newfoundland fishery. This is an old subject of discord, but the dispute has just now reached an acute stage. It appears that the action of the Governor, in forbidding the French to fish for herrings, has been the subject of complaint by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but the English Government supports the Governor; hence an interchange of unsatisfactory diplomatic notes.

THE Sultan is much pleased with Lord DERBY's reply to GORTSCHAKOFF's circular, and has ordered the Porte to officially thank the English Government. He has also sent his aide-de-camp to thank Mr. LAYARD.

#### UNKNOWN POETS.

"Few, few can touch the magic string,  
And noisy fame is proud to win them,  
Alas for those who never sing!  
But die with all their music in them."

So writes the American poet and humourist, Oliver Wendell Holmes; but I think we must take exception to the truth of his musical lines. There are numbers nowadays who "can touch the magic string," but "noisy fame is not at all proud to win them;" on the contrary, it either never heeds them, or else passes them over in silent neglect.

Thousands of aspirants to poetic fame who, for all we know otherwise, may have written poems of surpassing merit, await recognition in vain. The divine afflatus may be theirs; painstaking effort and patient toil may have aided their earnest purpose; they "may have scorned delights and lived laborious days," in order to accomplish their self-imposed tasks, and yet, no recompense is theirs to reap. They plant the seeds and tend the growth of their plants; but never gather any flowers. Every one knows that a MSS. volume of poems is considered a drug in the book market, and if by some fortuitous circumstance, or else by paying a publisher a large sum of money for its publication, the MSS. so long cherished and prized by its author attains the dignity of print, the chances are it is never reviewed and consequently never sells. The unknown singer, perchance not being a member of any mutual admiration society, and possessing no influence amongst those who have achieved literary distinction, pines in obscurity, and so despite his perseverance, he remains "unhonored and unknown," while the world, may be, has lost a second Chatterton or Keats. Such then being the destiny of those who seek to climb Parnassus nowadays, it may be worth while to inquire into the reason of this palpable fact.

In that delightful book by Alfred Austin on the poetry of the period, the author endeavors to prove very remarkably that the present age, as reflected in its opinions, thoughts, society, and conduct is absolutely antagonistic to the creation of great poets. And the writer after thoroughly examining the works of those who have attained distinction in the walks of poetry, namely:—Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, Arnold and others, arrives at the conclusion that these men are only third rate poets. He is of opinion that the verdict of posterity will not endorse the high praise that has been accorded them in this age; in short, he denies their right to be admitted among the immortals, concluding his essays with these words, "Many living writers of poetry have written beautifully and well, and some of their verse will for a time be kindly remembered. But they have fallen short of true greatness, and accordingly they will not be admitted among the stars that shine for ever and ever."

Now, it is not our intention to question the opinions of so erudite a scholar and poet as Mr. Austin; indeed, it would be presumptuous for us to combat them. We may take them as they are *cum grano salis*, or else "wide apart as the poles are asunder," from the entire truth of the matter. Be this as it may, we contend that his remarks, whether they do, or do not apply to the recognized poets of this era, at all events affect very materially the subject of this paper inasmuch, as according to our opinion, the present age, whose serious literature asserts itself in historical research, scientific inquiry, learned dissertations on all subjects, and subtle criticisms must be antagonistic to poetry, and is therefore fatal to poetic aspiration. A new poet lives amid influences malign to him; other literature usurps men's minds; there is no room for a singer of songs. The intellectual atmosphere he breathes dulls his efforts and silences his dreams. He is told by the seemingly wise that an epic is not an Archimedean lever to move the world. Writers of renown, such as Carlyle, Ruskin and many others, decry all poetry except the very best, and discourage all individual poetic striving after excellence. No wonder, then, the modern Pegasus cannot make any progress; that so many volumes of verse are still-born, and so many singers "die with all their music in them."

Another reason why there are so many unknown poets is that the press, hurry, restless energy of modern life preclude all severe intellectual amusement. People read for recreation books that make no strain on their intellectual faculties and, therefore, they eschew poetry. It is even questionable whether the well known poetry of the day is generally read. It is certainly considered fashionable to have the works of Tennyson or Browning on the drawing-room table, and yet perchance, the elegant bound volumes lie there, like articles of virtu, merely to be looked at. And we are afraid that the modern students of Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth, Byron, or even Shakespeare, are by no means legion. Sensational novels in three volumes, with their *pabula* of secret murders, wonderful intrigues, and unnatural incidents, gratify the tastes of those who seek mental relaxation after the dull day's onerous duties. Who wishes then to possess an unknown poet's book? Who even will take the trouble to peruse it?

The writer of this paper, during a visit he once paid Jane Ingelow, the accomplished poetess and novelist, wondered at the quantity of volumes of unknown poetry, on her table. "Were I to search those books," she remarked, "I am sure I could discover gems of song, which may be never destined to touch the heart of humanity." Reluctantly I had to acknowledge the truth of her remark.