

session of the parliament to which he was then elected, that the celebrated resolutions establishing Responsible Government were passed. Mr. Macdonald, at that time, was not the absolute adherent of any political party. With the sentiments natural to one who had determined to achieve his own position in the world, he was, in a manner, forced by the peculiar circumstances of the period to act with a party; with which, politically, he could have but little, if anything, in common. The rebellion, of which the effects had not then passed away, had rendered everything a question of loyalty and allegiance, especially in that part of Central Canada represented by him. His position was therefore, a very peculiar one, and without altogether identifying himself with the Tory opposition, he voted with the Upper Canada Conservatives and the Lower Canada French leaders, against the Government; thus taking a course seemingly inconsistent with his subsequent conduct. But the system of Executive Responsibility, so persistently and successfully pressed by Mr. Baldwin, having been adopted, Mr. Macdonald, with characteristic honesty, espoused the cause of the Ex-Ministers when, in 1843, Sir Charles Metcalfe attempted to subvert the established principles of Responsible Government, by asserting the right on his part, as Governor General, to make appointments to offices without consulting them. In taking that course Mr. Macdonald had the courage to imperil his seat, for the Highlanders of Glengarry were proverbial for their loyalty. Political right, however, triumphed over the false issues which were raised; and when the elections came, to which Sir Charles Metcalfe had recourse in his dispute with his Ex-Ministers, and it virtually appeared that the people had decided against him, the Highlanders of Glengarry, proving that their loyalty was not of the unreasoning kind, Mr. Macdonald was returned by a larger majority than before.

In 1847 his return for Glengarry was opposed, though unsuccessfully, by Sheriff McMartin. But in 1852 and 1854, he was elected by the same constituency, without a contest. In the latter part of the year 1849, he was appointed Solicitor General, under the Baldwin-Lafontaine administration, which office he held until the dissolution of that government in the autumn of 1851. Of the position he thus filled as the colleague of that great and good man, Mr. Baldwin, although public honors have fallen thick upon him since then, Mr. Macdonald, we are assured, entertains a higher sense of pride than of all of them put together, including even his present exalted position as chief minister of the crown in Canada. This feeling appears highly laudable, when we observe how the history of Canada is enriched by the record left by Mr. Baldwin's government, the unchallenged parity of conduct of that ministry, the lasting benefits which its legislation has conferred upon the country, by municipal, jury, primogeniture, university, and other wise measures of organization and reform. But more especially does the Prime Minister of the day rejoice that he held the place of second law officer of the crown in that administration, which, by a rigid adherence to constitutional landmarks, gave body and substance to the Parliamentary system of government then lately conceded, under which the united Province, despite of hindrances naturally incidental to its proper working at the outset, among a population so widely diversified in many essential respects as that of Canada, has made such rapid and satisfactory progress.

Mr. Macdonald was elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly after the first removal of the Public Departments to Quebec in 1852, and filled the Chair of the House until the dissolution in 1854. It was while at the head of the Canadian Commons, in June of the latter year, that he administered to Lord Elgin, the then Governor-General, that startling rebuke of memorable record in the journals of the Legislative Assembly. The summoning of Parliament together had been protracted to the latest period allowed by law and custom; and when, upon the consideration of the address, in answer to his Excellency's speech from the throne, an adverse vote was recorded against his Ministry, instead of the usual course being adopted of calling upon a new set of men to advise him, Lord Elgin summoned the members to his presence for the high handed purpose of an immediate prorogation. They were naturally excited and indignant that thus no opportunity would be afforded to Parliament for explanations in regard to its late convocation, nor of the reasons that might have existed for non-legislation during so long a period. Under the circumstances the Speaker was impelled, by loyalty to the constitution and

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THE CANADIAN Illustrated News.

HAMILTON, JANUARY 31, 1863.

NATIONAL MORALITIES.

It is a tradition in the office of the London 'Times', that in the early years of this century, while it was yet a second or third rate journal, Mr. John Walter and Company, its proprietors, launched a fast sailing privateer to scour the seas in the wake of Nelson's fleet, or in advance, snapping up prizes when Nelson gave no news, or crowding all sail for the nearest port in England, with news, when the great Admiral or any lesser Captain of a Squadron awoke the ocean with the thunder of battle. The privateer was a roving 'special correspondent' of the sea. And it is more than a tradition, it is an episode in the history of the war, as well as of the newspaper, that 'The Times' privateer carried tidings of the death of Nelson and the victory of Trafalgar to a channel port; from whence a messenger posted to London, giving the proprietors of the ambitious journal intelligence which they published twenty-four hours before the Government, or editors of newspapers, were informed that Nelson lay in his shroud; that Britain was mistress of the seas; that the fleets of France and Spain were extinct, and Britannia ruled the waves. That was the stroke of fortune which made the 'Times' forthwith it trot fast on the heels of the 'Morning Chronicle,' passed it, and has left it dead and buried. But that brave old newspaper might have had privateers to serve it also, had not honest Mr. Perry abhorred the offered services of such cut-throat crews.

The critical position of Canada, should the frail relations of peace between the British and the Federal Government of America be snapped by some act of the Alabama and other rovers of the sea, which, with law or against law, have cleared from British ports, renders the question of legalized piracy by privateers one of painfully vital interest to this Province. Strictly interpreted, neither maritime nor international law make the Alabama a privateer. Nor is she or her audacious sisterhood, legally speaking, pirates, though of that family. The North calls its southern military prisoners 'rebels,' but it dare not punish them with the death of rebels lest the South retaliate. Accordingly they are exalted to the status of belligerents, and treated as prisoners of war. Even the sea pirates, so named by the North which last year fell under Federal capture, though at first threatened with death, were tenderly dealt with as prisoners taken from a belligerent power. Why then should Britain not treat the Southern Confederacy as a belligerent power? The Alabama under the Confederate flag is, therefore, in the eye of the law of nations, as interpreted by the prudence of the Federal government, not a pirate, not a privateer, but a ship of war, scouring the seas in the service of one of the fighting powers. Having said this, the defence of the Alabama is stretched to its uttermost. The British subjects, if such there unhappily be, who may have fitted out, or sold, after fitting out, those equivocal cruisers to make prey of the commerce of Boston or New York, because these cities are loyal to the Federation, are playing a part for sordid objects fearfully perilous to the peace of Great Britain and the repose of Canada. True, they only do what America did before them. They follow the commercial instinct in its lowest development,—the sordid impulse only, and even that alloyed with the game of hazard. Nor do they differ from the privateering ship-owners, their predecessors of fifty or sixty years ago; unless, as charity suggests, Jonathan Wild is not one of the merchant princes of the Mersey or the Clyde.

It is on historical record, that in more than one flagrant instance, the enterprise of privateering, was not only brought to bear on English commerce by English capital, but even the very parties who sent out the merchant ship, and insured her against the King's enemies, sent out also, the privateer that captured her and thus made a double gain, by the insurer of the captive vessel, and by the sale of her cargo and hull, as lawful prize. Many a French privateer was owned by Englishmen, and manned by piratical renegades; and some English privateers were chartered by Frenchmen, for the capture of their own merchant ships. In the conduct of such crews, wilful cruelty towards their captives was alone wanted to complete the character of the pirate. On either side of the channel the day of the merchant ship's sailing, and her course, was duly notified to the privateer, that did the criminal work of the firm; and, thus, under the pretext of honorable warfare, innocent individuals were swindled by their own fellow-countrymen, and the honor of a nation tarnished for filthy lucre. Says another historical writer, referring to the foregoing; 'We have now no means of verifying this appalling charge; but judging by all we have read upon the subject, we have no reason to disbelieve it.'

By acts of Congress of the United States in 1794 and 1818, privateering was denounced, and was condemned by the Treaty of Paris in 1856. To comprehend what it was, a brief sketch may suffice. To know what it is or may be, in this age of steam, the reports of the Alabama's deeds would exemplify, if it be admitted that the Alabama is in any way under control of bad British subjects, who have defied the Queen's proclamation and broken the neutrality laws. As a general rule, the owners of privateers were not of the most reputable of citizens; yet, half a century ago, hardly a voice was audibly raised in condemnation of their enterprises. It has just been seen that a privateer formed a part of the Times newspaper establishment in 1805. The fitting out of such a cruiser, partook largely of the quality of gambling, as well as of high-sea robbery; for the vessel might be captured within twenty-four hours of leaving port, or it might send home a dozen prizes in as many days.

The captain was usually a sharer in the ownership of the vessel, and officers and crew sailed with a distinct agreement as to what per centage each would receive of the booty. In many instances, if a privateer did not fall in with any of the enemy's merchant-men during a cruise, the captain had little compunction in seizing a neutral ship rather than return empty handed, and boldly risked all consequences resulting from the piratical act. The vessels in use for that service, both French and English, were of all sizes and ngs, from mere luggars of twenty tons, carrying two 4-pounders and twelve men, to full rigged ships of 500 or 600 tons, heavily armed, and manned by crews of 200 or 300 men. These were formidable men-of-war, and capable of exchanging broadsides with a regular frigate. In fitting out those ships no cost was spared, the owners knowing that one successful trip might reimburse all. Swiftmess was the prime object to be obtained. The total number sent forth, both by England and France, was almost incredible. They prowled in every direction, and the narrow seas swarmed with them. The longest and best appointed took long sweeps on the main ocean, to fall in with homeward or outward bound ships, under convoy of men-of-war, and if not taken themselves they hovered on the track and picked up stragglers and slow sailers.

The British government had no share in the equipment and adventure of privateers. But documents have come to light proving that in the early period of the war, French companies hired vessels from their government. The 'charter-party' stipulated that the ships were to be completely fitted out by the government, the freighters providing and paying the crews. The cost of re-victualling and touching at any place was also at the charge of the freighters, but the costs for repairs to be defrayed by the Republic.

The net produce of the prizes to be thus divided: one-third to the crew, and a third of the remaining two-thirds to the Republic.

To show how incorrigible and shameless some ship-owners still are in defiance of stringent regulations, we may cite the instance of a member of Parliament, who is reported to have sent out numerous vessels laden with stores for the Southern Confederacy in breach of the Queen's proclamation of April, 1861. In the hot crisis of the Crimean war, 1854-55, this person having good ships, hired some of them to government at high rates to carry stores and troops. He had also bad ones, leaky in the hold, and low between decks. He obtained an associate to act as owner of those unwholesome hulks. By means best known to themselves the old vessels were insured as first-class, and they obtained full rates of freight from the Admiralty. Their owner combined with others and monopolized all the better ships in port, or as they arrived from India and China. He and the combination offered them to be employed as transports, but at prices absurdly extravagant. The machinery of extortion was worked in the House of Commons. The mouth-piece of the ship-owning combination, to coerce government into acceptance of his extortionate demands, assumed the attitude of indignant virtue. He accused the Admiralty of 'culpable negligence,' 'criminal ignorance,' 'wanton cruelty,' and all the rest of the bad things implied in philanthropic slang, in 'crowding our gallant soldiers into vessels not sea-worthy, foul as the black hole of Calcutta!' (Sensation in the House.)—Sir Charles Wood, then First Lord of the Admiralty, asked for the names of those defective transport ships. At a subsequent sitting of the House, on finding that the honorable member for Humanity declined to proceed with a motion of inquiry, being content, as he said, with having directed the notice of the authorities to the subject, whose duty it was to make the inquiry and apply the proper remedy; Sir Charles Wood said, in that case, he felt it necessary to make a statement: 'Inquiry had been made, and the transports complained of were found to be the property of the honorable member who had denounced them. He had employed an associate to sign the charter-party as owner, and deceive the Admiralty Agent, their apparent object being to extort extravagant rates of freights for other vessels.'

In the Crimean war false pretences were not exclusively the practice of shipowners. Shoes were made that melted in a day. Shoddy cloth took the place of woven wool. Bales of flannel shirts and stockings bore false marks of quality, and of manufacturers. Bales did not agree with samples. Grenadiers had the option of hosiery made for drummer boys, and had even for boys, or the privilege of going barefooted. Pick-axes and spades made by the constituents of Radical Mr. Roebuck, at Stettfield, or Tory Mr. Newdigate, in Warwickshire, were so bad that they would not even dig a sufficiency of graves for the perishing army. And so was it in the wars of Wellington. That great series of combats known as the Battles of the Pyrenees, were fought in 1813-14, and the rigours of winter encountered by half the British army barefooted. 'The army has been detained in quarters three months for the want of shoes,' wrote Wellington to the Secretary of State in 1811, 'and now that we have had the shoes one week, they are worn out. More attention to the honesty of army contractors and manufacturers, rather than to their politics and their habits of electioneering for government, would be a true advantage to this army.' (Colonel Curwood's edition of Wellington's Despatches.) So is it in America now, and has been through the present war. The sordid instincts subjuncte patriotism. Rebel privateers have been fitted out in Federal ports to prey on their own commerce. Fraud reigns in all the departments, military, naval and commissariat. The soldiers encounter winter and fight battles barefooted. In last century the chief of the British Commissariat pilfered one million pounds sterling for himself, and half as much for his subordinates in the war which dismembered the British Empire, and closed with the advent of the American Republic. He pilfered so well, so grandly, and was so loyal to George the Third, that he was made a Baronet, afterwards a Baron, his son a Viscount, while his grandson, still living, is an Earl. In the war which will end, seemingly by a fracture in that Republic not to be repaired, the American commissaries and army contractors promise to be as well endowed by the dismembering of a Republic as that eminent British Loyalist was by the rupture of an Empire. The problem of the Christian era is not one of honour in monarchies, or of virtue in democracies. There is a higher issue, and a Higher Law.