

## THE COMING WEEK.

SUNDAY,	Oct. 26.—	<i>Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.</i> Quebec: SS. "Sarmatian" due from Liverpool.
MONDAY,	" 27.—	Capitulation of Metz, 1870. Montreal: Adjourned General Meeting of Shareholders of Shedden Co.
TUESDAY,	" 28.—	<i>St. Simon and St. Jude.</i>
WEDNESDAY,	" 29.—	John Keats born, 1798. Montreal: Second day Montreal Hunt Steeple Chase.
THURSDAY,	" 30.—	Quebec: SS. "Severn," (Temperley), for London.
FRIDAY,	" 31.—	<i>All Hallows Eve.</i> Halifax: SS. "Nestorian," due from Liverpool.
SATURDAY,	Nov. 1.—	<i>All Saints Day.</i> Quebec: SS. "Casplan," for Liverpool. " SS. "Texas," for Liverpool.

## CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1873.

Our remarks upon the present political aspect of the country have during the last two weeks formed the subject of considerable comment in the daily press. The Opposition papers, led as usual by the *Globe*, endorse to a certain extent what we said upon the political outlook, and are especially careful to impress upon their readers' minds the idea that we are "a friend of Sir John's Ministry," "a steady supporter of the present Government," and so on. We desire to correct this statement. We are supporters of no particular Government and it is our intention to keep entirely aloof from all party strife. It is our aim to treat questions of public interest in a perfectly independent spirit, with an eye solely to the public weal. A journal of the class of the *News* would be entirely out of place were it pledged to support any party or individual, and we therefore may be counted neither as a supporter of the Ministry nor as forming a unit in the ranks of the Opposition. That our independence is an actual fact, is amply proved by the remarks of our contemporaries of both colours on the articles already mentioned. While the Opposition papers insist that we are a friend of the Ministry certain of the ministerial organs foolishly accuse us of having formed an alliance with the *Globe*. In other words, to the Ministerialists we are "Grit"; to the "Grits" we are Ministerialist. The truth lies between the two. We belong to neither party. Our mission is to keep away from the bickerings of both sides and to consider in an enlightened and unbiased spirit the questions of the day. We trust, then, that we shall hear no more of ourselves either as Government supporters or as having formed an "alliance" with the Opposition. Apropos of this story of the "alliance" a striking example of the truth of certain remarks we made last week on some peculiarities of Canadian journalism is given by the comments of an Eastern paper with which, we believe, the story originated. In our last issue we stated that "people are tired of having their political opinions dictated to them by prejudiced organs, whose inviolable rule is to find fault with everything suggested or carried out by their opponents, and invariably to lavish unbounded praise on the proposals and measures of their own supporters. It is a difficult thing in the present state of Canadian journalism for an unbiased reader to reach at the truth of a political question, so torn and rent is it by the struggle of rival factions. Little light is shed upon its bearings by the dissertations of rival organs, for these mainly consist of angry accusation and retort. There is but a small measure of argument to be found in the editorial columns of our leading dailies. They content themselves with brief assertion or contradiction as the case may be. They are loud in their protestations and denunciations, but the cry is out of all proportion to the wool. In their unseemly wrangling they remind one of country bumpkins belabouring each other with words, but afraid to come to the test, 'You're a liar?' cries one. 'You're another,' retorts the other. And there the matter ends." These observations had not yet appeared when our Eastern friend came out with a three quarter column that reads as though it had been expressly written to prove the truth of our assertions. The writer is evidently thoroughly angry at the so-called "alliance," and at the fact that our remarks on the situation had been extensively quoted and commented on. So he rushes into a slashing diatribe that was evidently calculated to overwhelm us. From the tone of the article one would suppose it to have been dictated by a spirit of personal animosity. Of argument there is absolutely none, but the writer makes up for absence of logic by indulging in unlimited invective and abuse. Indeed he shows himself possessed of a remarkable talent for calling names—a talent, however, which is of little use to, and little prized by respectable journalists. He abused the *News*, writers, artists, and everyone connected with it in a highly original and amusing style in which laboured efforts at wit and indignant vituperation struggle together for the mastery. He even drags in the names of outsiders—especially of a gentleman whose attainments are of the highest order, whose scholarship is unquestioned, and whose literary and artistic taste is the admiration of his friends and the despair of his enemies. But not a word of argument is there, from begin-

ning to end. Nor one-half pennyworth of logic to an intolerable deal of abuse. So is it only too often. We hardly expected such a very timely confirmation of our remarks, but we cannot but regret that our contemporary should have made himself such a glaring example of the truth of our statement.

THERE appears no reason to doubt that the election of Louis Riel to the House of Commons, for the County of Provencher, is a most untoward event which will add immeasurably to the already numerous and grave embarrassments of the Government. Sir John A. Macdonald had certainly enough to bear before this additional burden was laid upon his shoulders, and we fancy that none of Riel's enemies could more ardently desire the absence of that individual from Ottawa than the Premier himself. And it is not only the mere presence of the ex-Provisional President that is unwelcome, but the mission on which he is bent is likewise fraught with complications. Six weeks ago, Riel might have gone to Ottawa as the friend of the Government, the true successor of Sir George Cartier. Now he comes brandishing the tomahawk, like a Montaguais Chief on the war trail. He comes a fugitive from justice, denouncing what he brands as the duplicity and bad faith of the Government. When summoned, at the beginning of the month, to appear with Lepine, before the Court at Winnipeg, to answer for the death of Scott, he published a protest stating that the Government at Ottawa had promised, first to the delegates Ritchot, Scott and Black, and later, to Archbishop Taché, that there would be a general amnesty for all deeds committed during the insurrection; that relying upon this pledge, the people had retired quietly to their ordinary avocations and that he himself expected to be allowed to live in the peaceful enjoyment of his rights of citizenship. He then distinctly charges bad faith and breach of promise upon Sir John A. Macdonald and the Federal Government. It was with this protest, as a platform, that his name was presented to the electors of Provencher, and it was upon this issue that he was elected, by acclamation, to represent the constituency in Parliament. Now, what will the Government do with him? They cannot make proposals of compromise or conciliation, for the wrath of Ontario would rise once more into a fever. They cannot spurn nor brave him, for the French portion of Quebec, Conservative as well as Liberal, is in sympathy with him. The Ministerial journals in different parts of the Dominion, with a simultaneity which induces the suspicion of official inspiration, have recommended as the simplest and readiest solution of the problem, the promulgation of amnesty by the Imperial Government before Riel takes his seat. This would certainly settle the legal question of Riel's right to act as a representative in Parliament, by removing the disqualifications which an indictment for murder and a possible sentence for contumacy might entail. But we have serious doubts that it would allay popular feeling and thus relieve the perplexity of the Government. The Ontario Opposition would argue that the amnesty was wrenched from the Imperial authorities by Sir John for political purposes. The Quebec Opposition, while approving the act itself, would urge that it came too late, and was brought about not so much in the interests of the Metis, as for the personal behests of the Government. Certainly the whole of this wretched Red River business has been held too long in abeyance and if amnesty was to have been granted, more especially if amnesty had been promised, it should have been proclaimed long ago.

Beyond the danger to the Government, there is furthermore to be considered the danger to Riel himself in his coming to Ottawa. We shall not here give expression to our apprehensions, but rather trust that moderation and good sense will prevail and that the fair fame of Ontario will not be tarnished by any violence. Once in Ottawa, as member of Parliament, Riel is and should be under the protection of the Government. And this fact points to the probable necessity of hereafter making the city and district of Ottawa a separate or neutral ground, such as the District of Columbia, where the jurisdiction of the other Provinces may not extend.

It is a matter of congratulation that at length the Harbour Commissioners of Montreal have thoroughly awakened to the absolute necessity of improving the navigation of the St. Lawrence and enforcing safe conduct from the pilots. This year has been distinguished among many, by the frequency and seriousness of marine disasters, almost within sight of the towers of Notre Dame. Steamers have been stranded; collisions have taken place; the channel has been missed; proper lights and fog signals have been found wanting and the consequence has been that within less than a twelve-month the port of Montreal has acquired an unenviable notoriety among the shippers of the Clyde, the Thames and the Mersey. A gentleman well acquainted with both countries assured us only a few days ago that the merchants of Montreal had no idea of the harm which had been done to this port by the casualties of the past two seasons. Under the old Trinity House system, routine and ignorance kept everything back. Investigations were ordered on several important occasions, by the force of public opinion, but these inquiries were instituted long after the disasters occurred, and in the majority of cases, no report of proceedings was published. The newly constituted Board, representing the different interests of the commercial community, has inaugurated a happy change.

The investigation which it has just concluded, into the collision of the "Er! King" and "Cingaloso," was carried on with a thoroughness and knowledge of the subject which went directly to the very root of the accident, and the prompt decision which resulted in depriving the delinquent pilot of his branch will produce the happiest effects in forcing this class of public servants to perfect themselves in their profession. We trust the Harbour Commissioners will continue their good work and direct their attention to all the improvements which the rapidly growing trade of Montreal harbour imperatively requires.

It were useless criticizing or even calling attention to the oddities and anomalies which are constantly recurring in our Courts of Justice. When the outsider complains of them or even ventures to express his astonishment, he is generally answered by the men of the law that initiation is necessary to understand the mysteries of criminal procedure. Among lawyers themselves there has been of late a spirit of rampant criticism against the Bench of Judges, especially in the Province of Quebec, and no less a man than the Hon. Mr. Doria made a sweeping charge against that body at the last session of Parliament. His action was so far approved by the Profession that he was afterwards elected Batonnier. We have no disposition to enter to-day upon that vexed question, nor even to record any complaint against the judiciary, but we cannot allow the occasion of the last sitting of Queen's Bench in Montreal, to pass without animadverting on the queerness of some of the sentences delivered by the presiding Judge. A general character of leniency marked most of these sentences, which we take as a good sign and an apt application of the principle *finis legis potius emendatio*. But there were two sentences which, placed side by side, present an odd contrast. A poor fellow who had been found guilty of shop breaking was condemned to three years in the penitentiary. A gentleman found guilty of smuggling a considerable sum of money from a most deserving public charity, was condemned to only two years of penitentiary. It is not that we find the latter sentence too light, considering all the circumstances which were alleged in mitigation, but in comparison with it, will it not strike the average mind that the former sentence was too severe?

We learn from recently received English papers that at the very outset of the expedition which is about to bring the Ashantees to their senses a very serious mishap occurred which might have been attended with very serious results, but which, fortunately, led to nothing else than temporary inconvenience. It seems to be a characteristic of the Ministry at home that they can take nothing in hand without blundering over it. And certainly in this case they blundered sufficiently to excite the admiration of their most determined opponent. It appears that the ship in which Sir Garnet Wolseley and his staff were despatched to Madeira, en route for Sierra Leone and Cape Coast Castle had been hurriedly fitted up for service and when completed was totally unfit for occupation. In the first place the paint was barely dry when she started, and we are told that the whole lower part of the vessel was poisonous with the smell of the new paint. The vessel had open bulwarks and any more than ordinarily heavy breezes sent wave after wave over her. Of course in the slightest gale everything had to be closed up to prevent the water going below, and the result was that the inside of the vessel was almost uninhabitable from the close, unhealthy atmosphere, the smell of the paint, and the stench of the bilge-water of which a considerable quantity had accumulated during previous voyages. To crown the discomfort the vessel had been so badly caulked that the moment the deck became moist the water dripped through the boards into the berths below. Of course sickness was caused by the poisonous air in the cabins. Sir Garnet Wolseley himself was laid up for several days with the combined effects of the bilge-water and the paint. One of his officers had an attack of dysentery, brought on entirely by the paint, and nearly every one on board suffered from a kind of painter's colic. When it is taken into consideration that it was of the utmost importance that every member of the expedition should reach his destination in a state of perfect health in order to enable him to encounter the trials of an African climate, it is incomprehensible that so little care should have been expended in assuring not only comfort, but absolute safety, to the leaders of the expedition. It is to be hoped that this negligence is not to be looked upon as an indication of the importance which is attached to Sir Garnet Wolseley's services and to the arduous task he has undertaken.

We have received from Messrs. Dawson & Bros., Nast's Illustrated Almanac for 1874, published by Messrs. Harper & Bros. It contains a number of comic sketches and reading matter of a kind which we are surprised to see issued by a house of the standing of the Harpers. Both are extremely inferior in taste and in point, and cannot be taken as anything like fair specimens of what the artist and humourists are capable of turning out. As an advertisement it will doubtless attain its object.