

# THE WEEK.

Third Year.  
Vol. III., No. 3.

Toronto, Thursday, December 17th, 1885.

\$3 00 per Annum.  
Single Copies, 10 Cents.

## CONTENTS OF CURRENT NUMBER.

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES—	PAGE
Partisanship .....	Cyrl. 35
British Elections .....	Goldwin Smith. 36
Our English Letter .....	C. 37
The President's Address .....	B. 38
Notes from Quebec .....	Nemo. 39
TOPICS OF THE WEEK—	
The Riel Case Stated by Mr. Girouard .....	40
Injury by early frosts to the crops in Manitoba .....	40
The latest accession to the Dominion Government .....	40
No present relaxation of the Protective System in the States .....	40
Closer commercial union between Canada and the States inadvisable under a Protective System .....	40
Reciprocity and the Fisheries Question .....	40
Chinese Labour in Mining Operations .....	41
Scott Act Meetings .....	41
The Prohibition issue a contest between a higher and a lower form of religion .....	41
POETRY—	
Two of Earth's Creatures .....	Ferrars. 42
BOOK NOTICES .....	
MUSIC .....	44
LITERARY GOSSIP .....	44
OUR LIBRARY TABLE .....	44

## PARTYISM.

If anything were needed to convince one of the evils of partyism, the attitude of the Canadian political parties toward the Riel question would supply it. Prior to the execution, one of them wavered and hesitated in the face of a plain duty—the other shirked an honest expression of opinion, with the evident and despicable object of making party capital out of the Government's decision, were it right or wrong. Now that the penalty of treason has been paid, the party which had no opinion to express declares one strongly, and urges the extraordinary doctrine that our criminal law must be variously administered. The party which hesitated to perform a duty daily magnifies the excitement in Quebec, with a view to wresting from the Liberals their Ontario following. Between the contending factions race prejudices have been stirred up and religious fanaticism has been excited. A Confederation which seemed to be ready to put forth the first strong shoots of national existence is threatened with dissolution, and the work of eighteen years is overthrown in as many days. Every man who is fired with a single spark of patriotism must lament such a condition of things.

When there is little before the country—when the tariff for the time being works smoothly, and our granaries are full, partyism furnishes a not unpleasant excitement. Niagara is an interesting spectacle when its seething waters hurl themselves against one another and roll noisily over their precipice; but when humanity is seen battling with them, when the little boat that put off gaily from the shore is caught in the relentless current—is drawn faster and faster toward the brink, and is hurled pitilessly to destruction—the Niagara of sunny days and rainbow tints becomes a destroying monster to be shunned as life is valued.

The figure is not exaggerated. I ask you for one moment to look at the articles of the Reform press to-day. I ask you to turn your eyes upon the spectacle presented by men who, believing thoroughly in the justice of the sentence pronounced upon Louis Riel, deliberately appeal to the worst prejudices of simple and suspicious men—deliberately set race against race—deliberately pursue a policy which, if successful, could only result either in the rending of Confederation or in a bloody civil war; and all this that their party may obtain an election triumph, and that they may procure election spoils! It is enough to make a man doubt the sanity of his race.

But perhaps the worst feature of it is that, so widespread is the partyism that has produced this state of things, there is actually no means of appealing to the better judgment of the people. The press, with a few notable exceptions, is arrayed either on one side or the other. Whether one section speaks true or false, the message only reaches half the community, and, be a leading article honest or perfidious, it is practically without influence outside of its own party. Neither honesty nor perfidy increases the number of its readers, and it appeals only to those who are prepared to treat its utterances as dogmatical. Then, too, the views of the political papers are so evidently prompted by party interest that, when a grave crisis arises, and the more thoughtful of the editors endeavour to speak seriously, the old fable of the boy and the wolf finds a new application, and the burning words fall upon listless ears and unresponsive hearts.

At such a time the men who have permitted themselves to be ranked as partisans find their messages unheeded and their thunders unnoticed.

Happily in the very excess of party contention and the very universality of partyism there is ground for hope. The thinking men on both sides must become disgusted with a system in which adherence is pledged to undisclosed measures and a leader is blindly followed whithersoever he may lead—by which citizens obtain distorted views of the opinions of their fellow-citizens and prejudices are carefully fostered—and under which the real condition of things is misrepresented and the ascertainment of truth rendered almost impossible. But it will not do to wait complacently for such a revulsion of feeling. Those to whom the evils of partyism are patent must bestir themselves. Something more manly and more productive of good to the community than mere melancholy railing at the age and its evils, the system and its supporters, must be attempted. Those who feel strongly must face the question stoutly.

In this country, as was admitted by one of our leading political journals the other day, there is practically no difference in principle between the parties. That called Conservative might, at the present time, better be termed Experimental; while the so-called Reform party confines itself to professions of morality. Notwithstanding this fact, however, each man in the community must needs be either a Conservative or a Reformer, and long before our boys have the faintest conception of the nature of the Constitution under which they live, they have declared themselves as supporters of one side or the other, and have "discussed" the questions of the day from their party's standpoint. Emerging from this boyhood of bias they enter a manhood of blind party allegiance, and to their dying day the majority of them obtain their views of what is going on in, and what is best for, their country from a press which is occupied in presenting, as Solonic, the measures of one set of statesmen, and in aspersing the characters and belittling the theories of another set, equally as worthy either in their measures or their morals. We do not attach much blame to the toymaker who, with the same brush, makes one doll a villain and the other a judge; but we wonder at the gullibility of the children who are deceived by his handiwork.

Should a young man declare that he has not made up his mind which side to choose he is looked upon with something akin to contempt. He is reproached with being "on the fence," and is twitted with a lack of manliness. "Why does he not come out on one side or the other?" say the partisans, when all the time the only man among them is he who refuses to degrade his intellect by neglecting its use.

General, however, as is the lack of any kind of preparation for the privilege of the franchise, the time of its first exercise is the time when appeals to the reason are most sure of a hearing and an effect. At this time, then, let something be urged in favour of freedom of opinion. Let those who feel the evil that partyism has done, and the ill that it is doing, speak out. Let them declare to the young men about them that the field of thought is not necessarily confined to the opinions advocated by the political parties of the country, and that reform is not limited to the party platforms. Let them laugh to scorn the idea that one side embraces all that is good and the other all that is evil. Let them urge those upon whose integrity and intelligence the future of the country rests to pledge themselves to neither party; but to maintain inviolate through life their right to vote as they think and to advocate what they believe. Let societies be formed in every town and village—call them Canadian clubs if you will—where the questions affecting the welfare of that country may be discussed freely, and let the sole condition of membership be the renunciation of partyism of every shape and form. If such a course be adopted, partyism will not cease, but the servility of the party press, the extravagances of party leaders, the self-seeking of party politicians—in short, the evils of the party system—will be awed, checked, neutralized, and counter-balanced by the ever-shifting ballast of righteous independent opinion.

An independent press is a pre-requisite to the formation of such a healthy public opinion: and, even as ballast, to be effective, must be controlled and rightly placed, so the mass of independent men must be directed by an independent press so to marshal themselves that the gallant barque, "The Canada," may safely weather the storms which beset her, and, in spite of prophets of evil, demagogues, economic theorists, speculative thinkers, men without hope and men without fear, ride securely, with an ever-increasing