

## CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1873.

The prevailing topic in all men's mouths during the last two weeks has been the execution of the crew of the "Virginus," and the diplomatic difficulties that are likely to arise therefrom to disturb the always precarious relations between the Governments of the United States and Spain. Cuba, under Spanish rule, has ever been an eyesore to Americans, and has long caused an itching of the American palm. It is not to be wondered therefore, that the large majority of the American press seize with undisguised eagerness upon the "Virginus" horror as a handy pretext for urging the immediate annexation of the island to the Union. In the interests of humanity we believe that the absorption of Cuba by the United States would be about the very best thing that could happen. For years past the Pearl of the Antilles has been acquiring a most unenviable reputation for the lawlessness that is abroad within its limits. The barbarities that disgraced its rulers have called in vain for redress. But the cup of iniquity is full at last and the days of the Spanish rule are as good as numbered. The mere capture of the "Virginus" was in itself a matter of little moment to outsiders; an affair to which the world paid little heed. The vessel was a merchantman, manned by filibusters, and engaged in carrying contraband of war to a belligerent port. But it is the barbarous massacre of the crew, of a band of men of various nationalities, without the formality of a trial, and without orders from head quarters, that cries aloud for vengeance. That the cry would be answered appeared at one time extremely doubtful. The promptitude of the United States Government in avenging the wrongs of its citizens is not what it was once boasted to be. The case of Dr. Howard gave ample proof of this. The shilly-shally of the Washington officials in that matter did much to hurt the prestige of the country, and now we find the Spanish organs in Cuba actually daring the United States to interfere. The Spanish people, says the *Constancia*, have not become degraded to such an extreme as to be frightened by those who might have to pay dear for their insolence in the event of intervention. We are glad to see that the United States will, to all appearance, insist, at the cannon's mouth, upon redress. It is to be hoped, too, that England will not forget her own foreign prestige and will demand a strict account for the lives of her subjects who perished at Santiago de Cuba. The tenure of power at present enjoyed by the Gladstone Government is feeble indeed, and any neglect to avenge such a deliberate insult to Great Britain would be the death-knell to its hopes. The question is one in which great issues are involved to more than one nation. Spain has unquestionably shown herself totally unfit to govern Cuba, and the time has come for her to place the reins of government in stronger hands. Such an action would inevitably result in the fall of Castelar from power, and possibly in the triumph of Don Carlos. Yet the alternative, in the event of refusal, would be bitter and humiliating to Spain. The Republic, with the Intransigentes on one side and the Carlists on the other, has enough to attend to at home, without engaging in a foreign quarrel which must prove disastrous, and possibly fatal to its very existence. Even were Castelar to take the more graceful course; to refuse to recognize the action of the Spanish authorities in Cuba, to apologize for the indignities put upon the American and English flags, and inflict condign punishment upon the perpetrators of the massacre, the injured parties would still be justified in saying: You are not strong enough to direct matters in your West Indian colony, your authority is virtually *nil*, and we insist upon your handing over the island to a Power that shall be capable of enforcing its laws and putting an end to the scandals which have disgraced you in the eyes of the nations.

There is an amusing phase about the Cunningham-Heney affair, which has been entirely overlooked by the daily press—perhaps for the reason that the press of both sides of politics played no inconsiderable part in the little comedy. On the morrow of the day when the member for Marquette made the statement in the House that he had been approached by alderman Heney who sought to induce him with a bribe to throw his influence on the ministerial side, the Reform papers loudly denounced Sir John Macdonald for his neglect in moving that the offender be brought to the bar of the House, and his delay in causing an investigation to be made. On the other hand the ministerial papers defended, as in duty bound, the Premier's line of conduct. When, however, the parties changed sides and Sir John's followers found themselves in the cold shades of Opposition, the cry was changed. The names being altered the story was the same. The new Opposition cried out against the new Ministry for neglecting to order an investigation, and the new ministerial papers defended the omission. Without for one moment justifying Sir John's neglect we think it is to be regretted that the incoming Ministry did not institute an inquiry. It would only have been what could be expected after the persistent demands of their supporters for immediate investigation, and by so doing they would have wrested one engine of assault from their opponents. As the matter stands it is somewhat complicated. If Mr. Cunningham's statement is correct it would manifestly have been to the interest of the late Minis-

try to hasten enquiry. This they neglected to do. If Alderman Heney's statement is correct, then a supporter of the present government is guilty of deliberately mis-stating facts on the floor of the House, and the Ministry should be only too eager to remove such a stain from their party. Both sides, however, have avoided investigation and the public is at liberty to draw what conclusions it likes.

The present lull in the political atmosphere is singular and significant. People speak of the momentous contest which has just closed with ill-disguised feelings of dubiousness. They look to the future with no bright anticipations. The leading organs of public opinion are reticent. The chief ministerial papers tell us nothing of their plans or their policy. Liberals and Conservatives regard the interval between this and the meeting of the Parliament, as an interregnum, during which nothing definite can be done. The reason for all this doubt and hesitancy is not far to seek and it should be made known. We trace it to the strange action of Mr. Mackenzie, and his cabinet. Of course, he could not appear himself in his seat on the Treasury Benches, to proclaim his Ministry, and give a few words of explanation. But as he was not present when Sir John announced his resignation; nor the next day when Mr. Geoffrion asked for an adjournment; nor the day after, when the Prorogation took place, the Opposition, his own party and, above all, the Country had a right to expect a few words from some one authorized to speak in his name. The vicarious intervention of Mr. Holton and the bad temper which that gentleman displayed at the very last moment, created a disagreeable impression. The strength of parties is so nearly balanced, that it would have been unwise for Mr. Mackenzie to make or caused to be made in his name, a formal declaration of policy; but there were many ways in which he might have intimated to the Country, the course he intends to pursue. Having failed to do so, and his organs still failing to do so, the consequence is that the public mind is a blank and that the present aspect of things is by no means cheering.

The early winter which has surprised us this year bears forcibly to mind the truth of the disagreeable fact that the severity of our climate, especially in the Province of Quebec, is a serious drawback to the material prosperity of the country. If the rigor of our winters decreased, in the course of time, as it has done in the West, consequent on the clearing of the forests, the drainage of marsh lands and the settlement of wide wastes of territory, there would be some chance of bettering our condition. But unfortunately, from some meteorological peculiarities still unknown to us, the climate of Lower Canada has not varied one degree from that of the days of Champlain. Having this great fact, therefore, staring us in the face, we should learn to adapt ourselves to the circumstances which it creates. There never was a greater mistake than to make this Province an agricultural country. What can the field produce when it is ploughed only at the end of April, and is frost-bound in the beginning of November? How can cereals grow in a land where there is no Spring, but a sudden leap from Winter to Summer, and where the Summer itself is generally a series of blighting droughts? The Province of Quebec was meant by nature to be a manufacturing district. Its water-power, unrivalled in the world, points to that destination. In Summer, the mere fall of the water, by simple contrivances, can be made to propel machinery, while in Winter, steam can be used to the greatest advantage. Instead of sitting idle for five months in the year, around the fireside, our farmers and our farmers' sons should be employed in the mill, the foundry, the workshop and the factory. Much has been done towards meeting the true wants of this Province, but much more remains to be accomplished. For the furtherance of the change in this respect, we look to foreign immigration. The more skilled workmen are attracted to Canada, and to the Province of Quebec, the better. Several French gentlemen, of means and experience, have attempted the opening of manufactures in our midst, and though their efforts have so far not been very successful, not even among their French Canadian compatriots, we trust that their good example will still bear fruit. The French speaking population of the Province, which comprises the vast majority of the inhabitants, is precisely the one which has to move in the premises.

In looking over our large list of exchanges, it strikes us that sufficient notice has not been taken of a new work of reform which is being vigorously prosecuted in Montreal. We refer to the official inspection of meat and fish. The amount of putrid and tainted matter which is confiscated every week for having been offered, on the public markets, is something appalling. The serious resistance made by dealers to the Inspectors is additional proof of the magnitude of the evil which is being combated. Now, there seems to be no reason to doubt that the same infamous impositions on the public are practised in such cities as Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Quebec, St. John and Halifax. Inspection with them must be as necessary as with the inhabitants of this city, and hence it is that we call their attention to the important crusade against swindling which has been inaugurated here. It is a question of hygiene which interests all classes, especially the poor who are less able to defend themselves against the exactions of unscrupulous dealers. In summer, when the lighter meats are more in use,

it is well known that a bit of tainted mutton—and mutton will not keep beyond a day, except on ice—is simply poisonous. In winter, when pork is in general demand, the insidious presence of trichina should be the object of particular search. In Montreal, sausage is largely made from refuse meat, and the same may be the case elsewhere. This is clearly a question for municipal legislation, and, in large cities, the Inspectors should be supported by the whole authority of the Board of Health.

Are the beings in the Spirit World able to cast off their nationality, their education, and their individuality, when they shuffle off this mortal coil. It would seem so. At all events, the language employed by the spirit of Dickens in dictating the continuation of "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" to the Brattleboro' medium would warrant us in the belief. In the supplement to the novel, the novelist is made to speak of events "transpiring," of the "walking-beam" of an English steamer, of the "balance" of a man's life, and of credulous persons who "endorse" what other people have "stated." Dickens was not always a perfect grammarian, but he was at least an educated man, and could speak English. After his death he appears to have embraced the characteristic idiom of the uneducated New Englander. The metempsychosis is not a pleasant one.

A bright proposition for the prevention of railway accidents has been made by an English genius. This individual suggests that every engine should be fitted with an apparatus for instantly disconnecting it from the train it draws. In the case of obstruction ahead the driver would instantly detach the engine, and with his faithful stoker, charge on the obstruction, either to victory or to death. A very pretty theory indeed. If it were carried out to the letter, the heroism of Curtius would be utterly eclipsed, though perhaps more availing. In the first place, what have the engine drivers to say to it. And even if devoted men enough were found to risk their life in this manner, what about the impetus sustained by the cars, which would almost inevitably follow their leader to their fate.

The truth of the maxim that circumstances alter cases was never more clearly proven than in the case of M. Assi, *quondam* Communist, and now occupant of the responsible post of director of mines in New Caledonia. The miners, under the leadership of Paschal Grousset, ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Commune, recently struck; but the director, forgetful of the prominent part he had formerly taken in the organization of strikes at Creuzot, was equal to the occasion, put down the strike with an iron hand, and administered a sound thrashing to his former colleague, the ex-Minister. The oft-quoted saying, *calum non animus, mutant qui trans mare currunt*, hardly holds good in this case.

Canadian journalism appears, unfortunately, to be falling into disrepute both at home and abroad. Lord Dufferin's statement that the newspaper reports of what goes on in Parliament are utterly untrustworthy has been capped by a remark from the *New York Albion*: "Now that Sir John has retired from office," says that journal, "his past acts will be freely criticized, even by the most truckling portion of the Canadian press, than which there is, perhaps, not a more unworthy and crouching one to be found in the world." That is a hard hit, but the real sting lies in the truth it carries with it.

The immigration of Americans into Canada looks odd enough, but it is nevertheless a fact. From January to October of the present year, six thousand five hundred Americans settled in the Dominion, and the value of effects entered by them amounted to one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Within the past five weeks over fifteen hundred Canadians have returned from the United States to their old homes.

The new law that has recently come into force in the United States with regard to the transportation of animals is deserving of the attention of members of the S. P. C. A. It imposes a fine of not less than \$100, nor more than \$500, for confining animals in cars, boats, or vessels, longer than twenty-eight consecutive hours without having been unloaded for at least five consecutive hours for rest, water and feed.

Mr. Arch appears to have been discriminating between the United States and Canada, and very much in favour of the latter. He demands from Uncle Sam twenty dollars a head, paid in advance, for the labourers he is bringing over; and not unnaturally Uncle Sam does not see it. What is the meaning of this? Is Canada the true Land of Promise after all?

It is said that the Government have declared themselves to two clergymen from Prince Edward Island as in favour of denominational schools in that Province. We doubt the accuracy of this information. If true, however, it is safe to foretell that such a policy will break the Government all to pieces.

The late elections in the United States have resulted in the return of candidates antagonistic to the Republican party and the present administration. In the West, more especially, the change in public feeling amounts almost to a revolution, and politicians do not know how to account for it.