

(Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.)

THE FAITHLESS VALENTINE.

See, in a country far away,
On February's thirteenth day
A pink note at my elbow lay:
It was an early Valentine.

"Meet me at dawn on Beacon Hill,
"Nor dare forego the tryst to fill.
"Obey—slave! for it is my Will
"That you shall be my Valentine."

I kept the tryst, while faint as yet
The rosy dawn. My glad eyes met
Imperious orbs of sparkling jet
Of cousin Nell, my Valentine.

'Twas heaven—but soon from heaven I
fell!
One fleet, mad year dissolved the spell—
Arch Houris and arch traitress, Nell
Was some one else's Valentine.

Youths! to the good old custom cling—
Blush, Maidens! at the postman's ring—
I know the years will never bring
To me another Valentine.

NED P. MAB.

RANDOM THOUGHTS ON SOCIAL DIFFERENCES.*

The axiom that "all men are equal," one of the key-stones of the American Constitution, as enunciated in the Declaration of Independence, is by no means the self-evident proposition which, by some, it has been assumed to be. I shall, of course, be told that I am putting a wrong construction on that famous manifesto, that its letter may appear to sanction universal equality, but its spirit refers only to the status before the law. There are several ways of construing it, but, from the self-assumptions of all our neighbours, it is apparent that they use the term in its widest possible sense, for, according to them, "Jack is as good as his master" and very much better.

It is true that at the Creation of Man it was intended by the Great Ruler of all things that such should be the case. Man was placed among the beauties of Eden to dress them and to keep them, an occupation pleasurable in the highest degree, and under the then constitution of things, by no means a work of labour or a task in any way distasteful. There he might revel among the glories of Paradise, and as he chose, and only as he chose, tend and care for the bowers and groves which Nature herself had decked with Heaven-sent ornaments. At this period I am prepared to endorse the axiom of an universal equality destined for the dwellers on this lower earth; and, indeed, to assert their pre-eminence over those celestial intelligences who were but the messengers to those His creatures whom the Highest had deigned to treat almost as equals. These conditions, however, did not last, for those to whom a free and unfettered will had been given broke through the moral restraints by which they should have been held, and Man fell from the position assigned him. From that time there ensued contests for supremacy, the first of which culminated in the fratricide of Cain; but it was not until the time of Ham that the dividing line of master and servant was struck. Since that time these distinctions have been well defined, both in Sacred and Profane History. Among the Hebrews we have found the classes which were constituted by the Law, the highest among which were those of the Priestly order, whilst throughout, since the days of the Kings, we find references to the Princes of Israel and the Slave or Servant class. In Greek and Roman annals there are frequent allusions to classes, with the enumeration of which it is neither necessary nor advisable to deal. A similar system universally prevailed, and exists to-day, except that, with but a few instances to the contrary, the slave class has been obliterated, and, in its stead, remains that best abused, but in times of necessity whether national or political, most courted class—the labourer, or, as in our days he is best known, the working-man. It might perhaps be permissible to make a brief digression to say a word about the classes or rather castes of semi-civilized India. Here we find the proud Brahmin at the head, whence follow almost innumerable gradations down to the miserable Pariah, or outcast of all men. So marked are these distinctions and so scrupulous are the Hindoos in their observance, that, in a high degree, may be traced to this fact the great Indian Mutiny by which so many of our countrymen from the Mother Isles lost their lives at the bloody hands of the Sahib-slaying Sepoy. Indeed, I have been told by a gentleman, an officer in the East India Company's service, that, though he had nine attendants, he has repeatedly had to wait in that climate an almost insufferable period for a glass of water, simply because his hewer of wood and drawer of water was not at the moment to be found, none of the others being willing to discharge his functions.

All men are not equal. There are gradations of birth, and especially is this the case in the Eastern Hemisphere, where monarchy and aristocracy exist and flourish, and are likely so to do, in that the instincts which have been born into the people and which subsequently have received fostering care, cannot be smothered or eradicated, for, as has been well said, "the spirit of a nation never dieth." To most revolutions which have occurred, notably in that unhappy country, France, the only result has been the slaughter of innocent victims, and the consignment to the most dismal obloquy of the names of their instigators and the prime actors in them. Who hears the names of Danton, Marat, or the bloody Robespierre, without a shudder or an execration? whilst the slightest mention of their victims is never unattended with a feeling of the warmest pity and deepest regret for their untimely fate. In the case of France, what was the final result? The first Consul Napoleon assumed the Imperial purple and soon deluged, not only his beloved France, but the whole of Europe with blood. I pass on, only mentioning the placing by the allied powers of the sceptre of France in the hands of Louis XVIII, the abdication of Charles X, and the enthronement of Louis Philippe. This brings us to another term of anarchy, when the Vox Populi loudly de-

clared itself to be the Vox Dei, and at whose demands the terror-stricken Louis fled. Then followed the massacre of La Place Madeleine, the election to the office of President of the nephew of the first Emperor, and grandson of the much-injured Josephine. Despite the cries of *Liberté, Egalité, et Fraternité*, another Emperor stepped on the Throne, in the person of the President, whose reign for many years was the most productive of prosperity to the nation whom he ruled. Lastly came the Franco-German war, with the details of which we are all acquainted; the surrender and deposition of Louis Napoleon, the terrible days of the Commune, and the dictatorial sway of Thiers, whom we have just seen, in his late address to the Chamber of Deputies, advocating a Conservative Republic. What this anomaly is time will show.

The last great event in French history is the recent death of Napoleon the Third, whose untimely decease cannot but be regretted on all hands. In this case there can be little doubt that history will repeat itself, that his remains will be removed from Albion to his native France, and will yet repose beside those of his illustrious uncle, whose dust, after years of quiet 'neath St. Helena's sterile soil, were, by permission of the British Government, removed to that land whose military glory was, with him, a consideration only secondary to his own personal renown. For the present Prince Louis Napoleon, as he is styled in the latest telegrams, there is no doubt a great future in store. The training he is undergoing in English circles will serve to mature that precocity for which he is already remarkable, and for this youthful "man of destiny"—a confirmed belief in which has no doubt been almost his sole paternal inheritance—there are no doubt numerous vicissitudes in store, which must culminate in his ascending the French throne as the choice of nearly the whole French populace.

The case of Switzerland might, perhaps, be urged as one in which a Republic has flourished in Europe; but this is not a fair example. That little Republic may well be dismissed by being likened to the "Village Pastor," of whom Goldsmith has said:—

"Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had chang'd nor wish'd to change his place."

As we have it on this side, men o'ertop each other by their wealth and the positions they have acquired through its instrumentality. Where do we see this more apparent than in this very city where every one bows at the feet of Mammon, the most constant of these worshippers being the men who are the loudest and most blatant advocates of equality? Plutus' command to-day is "Thou shalt not be poor." How many come short of this, and how many are flung by the purse-proud under the wheels of the car of the Juggernaut of dollars and cents! Few men of talent can attain the positions they should occupy in our present social system without wealth, and how many are there of whom it might be said with Gray that,

"Chill penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current in their soul!"

Thus these latter have had to assume positions far inferior to those to which by ability they were entitled.

There are reasons why men should not be equal, to some of which it might be well to allude. Inequality is a necessity of our manhood, for were all equal under the existing order of things, there would be continual clashings both of person and interest. There are too many who, like his Satanic Majesty, think it far

"Better to reign in hell than serve in Heaven."

They wish to lead, any following, be it only a corporal's guard of brainless idiots, satisfies that ambition which will not allow them to follow in the wake even of those who are greatest and best.

Inequality is a national necessity. Our country demands that some should rush to the fore, and not allow a Commune, the members of which have no points in common, except that of a desire for power and pelf, to seize upon what there is around them, and, as of old, to cast lots upon it, and for want of agreement to rend all in sunder, and produce a period of chaos and confusion, worse than that anterior to creation. While the latter was only the indiscriminate jumbling of inanimate matter, the former would be a direct collision of intelligences, highly developed for good or for evil, few of whom have the same or similar wishes and aspirations.

The different sections or classes are at present diverse indeed in their characteristics. We have men of high birth and others of low parentage, a connecting link between whom is formed which serves as a stone on which to grind off the natural asperities of each—being what is called the middle-class. This latter is made up of the fallen—shall I say? aristocrats. No, the unfortunate ones whose wealth, for that is a necessity of greatness, has been depleted, on which account they are compelled to exert themselves to gain a livelihood. This class is also partially composed of those who by superior intelligence have risen from the ranks. Another element in the body is that which is a product of the two branches which, of course, combines the finer qualities of the one with the dogged perseverance and pertinacity of the other. In Canada we have no aristocracy, our upper-class being the wealthy middle men who, too often, it is to be regretted, on account of the wealth and honours, civil and political, of which they have been the objects, drift away and lose themselves, their last state being worse than the first. The middle-class men are to-day the power in our State; they conduct our commercial affairs, project and direct our railways, manage our banks, and fill all the offices of Church and State. They are the typical class of shop-keeping England. Through them we enjoy the civil and religious freedom which is ours to-day, and by which alone the mighty fabric of that most glorious British Constitution exists.

Of late the star of the working-class has been in the ascendant, and the question of their rights and position is one with which each one of us in some form or shape will have to deal. Here, where our institutions are intensely Democratic, where the Liberalism and Chartism of England are thrown completely in the shade, by means which have not the objectionable features of similar instrumentalities in days gone by, the men have to be met fairly and squarely. They have rights which are and should be recognized by all right-thinking and conscientious men, but by means of politicians and demagogues who desired their votes, their feelings have been inflamed to such an extent, and their demands so increased that their truest and best friends fear the result, as those who see through this thin coating of philanthropy are determined to leave no stone unturned to make use of it. In the course they have pursued both parties have

adopted a policy which must prove most disastrous. The men will find to their cost that they have been lifted up above themselves, whilst the employers will have to suffer all the inconveniences and annoyances arising out of those assumptions. This difficulty, it would seem, will not be surmounted until another of the many open ruptures between capital and labour has been fought out, and by force of circumstances, regulated by supply and demand, each one learns that the interests of the other are precisely identical with his own. As has been often said, Education is the great cure-all, and when its blessings have been fully realized then shall we advance again towards the position of Universal Equality.

Miscellaneous.

China shows a slight indication of an intent to come into the family of nations by its recent adoption of an imperial flag. It is a triangular bunting of deep yellow with a blue dragon courrant in the centre.

An enterprising American is doing great business among the whales in Iceland. He pursues them in a small steamer, and fires into them an explosive harpoon of his own invention, which bursts inside the animal and kills it outright. Thus time is saved and risk avoided.

A rival to the "Bessemer Saloon" has appeared in Russia. It is the invention of M. Alexandrowsky, of St. Petersburg, and instead of being attached to a pivot, like the Bessemer, floats in a kind of tank placed amidships between the engines. The construction has been tested by the Grand Duke Constantine with a perfectly satisfactory result.

Successful experiments have been made on an English railway, with a new brake worked by electricity. The invention consists of the application of electro-magnets, exerting a force of six hundred pounds, to pulleys on a swing shaft underneath the carriages. By merely pressing a key the guard is enabled to bring the train to a stand-still.

Bradlaugh, writing in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, denies that he is the chief of the republicans, but confesses: "That I have ambition to rise in the political strife around me, until I play some part in the legislative assembly of my country, is true. If I live, I will; but I desire to climb step by step, resting the ladder by whose rungs I ascend firmly on parliament-made laws, and avoiding those appeals to force of arms which make victory bloody and disastrous."

H. M. S. "Challenger" arrived at Lisbon on the 3rd ult. No explorations were attempted for the first few days of the passage, as all the *servants* were "down" with sea-sickness. On the 30th, however, the steam dredge was used, coming up the first time bottom upwards, to the disappointment of everybody. The second attempt was more successful, some starfish and a good specimen of the *Goniatites* being among the contents. This was at a depth of 1,250 fathoms. The dredging of subsequent days brought up nothing of interest.

The principals of some of the New York public schools have adopted the precaution of drilling the scholars in military fashion for regular, orderly flight in case of fire or other emergency. The doors opening into the alley-ways are first closed, and at the sound of a bell the children, often numbering many hundred, rise to their feet; at the second touch of the bell they rush for the main stairway, each child having his or her place in the ranks. The results so far have been eminently satisfactory, even the smallest children proceeding in regular order.

According to the *Printers' Register*, there are published in the United Kingdom 112 daily newspapers, distributed as follows:—London, 14; Provinces, 64; Scotland, 11; Ireland, 20; Wales, 2; Channel Islands, 1. Statistics show that in the United States and in Switzerland there is one newspaper to every 6,000 inhabitants; in Denmark there is one to every 8,000; in Germany, Norway, and Holland, one to 18,000; in France, one to 20,000; in Sweden, one to 22,000; in England, one to 24,000; and in Belgium, one to 26,000. In other European countries there are far fewer newspapers in proportion.

Yet another political organization has been called into existence. It is of Irish paternity, and is to be called The Central British Democratic Convention, the design of which is to obtain the assistance and alliance of English Democrats, "so as to create a combined force sufficient to effect a restoration of our plundered lands and our plundered political rights." Its "objects" are fourteen in number, and include the amendment of the English Constitution, codification of the laws, the establishment of manhood suffrage, the disestablishment of the House of Lords and the Church, and the nationalization of the land. Taxation is to bear on property and income alone, and to reach large incomes by a "geometrical law." Customs duties are to cease, taxation to be reduced, sinecures and pensions abolished, the poor are to be housed rent free, and Ireland, in addition to all these advantages, is to have the full right to govern itself as a colony.

Mr. John Dixon writes to the *Globe* on the subject of "Cleopatra's Needle," which we all know really belongs to us, although we have not found out how to get it home. "The removal of this fine obelisk from Alexandria, and its erection on the Thames Embankment, has lately been mooted. I have just returned from Egypt, where I am constructing an iron bridge across the Nile, and I had the curiosity when there carefully to examine the position of the monolith, and to survey the adjoining foreshore. I need not trouble you with the details, but simply give you the result of my estimate, as a guide to those interesting themselves in the matter. There are no difficulties in the way, and the obelisk may be shipped, brought to England, and erected on the Embankment for £15,000—not a great sum for the acquisition of so ancient a monument." If our liberal Government cannot afford so much, and no wealthy and benevolent archeological patriot will give it, why not start a public, or, as we ought to say now, a national, subscription for the purpose?

A curious incident is related in a French paper as having occurred in a little village not far from Paris. Some bees were swarming on an oak-tree, and a wood-cutter named Gulet climbed the tree and cut off the extremity of the branch upon which the swarm hung. Instead of falling to the ground, however, the swarm dispersed and settled on the head of Gulet, who was still sitting on the branch forty feet from the ground. The by-standers believed that, tormented by the stings, he would fall to the ground. But with great presence of mind Gulet remained perfectly still till the swarm had formed two long wreaths hanging from his temples; then, half blinded by the insects, which also covered his face and body, he contrived to descend from his elevated position, taking the greatest care not to irritate his living mantle. When he reached the ground a hive was placed on his shoulder, but three hours elapsed before the bees would take possession of their new home. When this happy change was effected the poor wood-cutter's wild delight testified to the intensity of the anxiety and discomfort he had endured.

*A paper read before the McGill University Literary Society by Mr. J. F. Norris.