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MONDAY MORNING, MARCH 26, 1883

FIGHTING THE N.P.

Some important failures which have recently taken place show that there is trouble in the air, and more are expected. The bank statement for February, though pronounced favorable on the whole, has in it one unwelcome item—an increase of overdue debts up to the aggregate of $406,000, or $176,000 more than in January. That the statement for March will when it appears show a further increase of this unpleasant item in the account is looked for as certain. While our best authorities on such matters do not by any means anticipate a financial panic, they are nevertheless of opinion that a pretty hard "squeeze" is at hand, which will try severely the standing of more than a few commercial firms, and which will wring out many speculators.

There is room for more than a suspicion that a prime moving cause of recent over-importation has been a strong inclination to fight the N. P. on the part both of English sellers and Canadian buyers. It looks as if on both sides there had been a rash resolve to keep fighting the N. P. with overwhelming importations of English goods, sold at non-paying prices. Of course this is a matter more of conjecture than of certainty; it is from the nature of the case impossible to cite precise particular facts in support of the view here advanced. That there has been excessive importation is beyond question, but the particular causes which have continued to bring it about are not so easily settled upon. Meantime we simply hazard the guess that a disposition to fight the N. P, with unprofitable sales of English imported goods has had more than a little to do with the over-importation craze. Further developments will soon show how far right we are in this conjecture.

A COLLAPSE IN BUTTER.

The suspension of the large Montreal produce exporting firm of A. Hodgson & Sons, which really consisted of one individual, Mr. Thomas H. Hodgson, has naturally enough raised a discussion as to the causes of the disaster and various conflicting reports. This much seems to be agreed upon, that the firm has for some time back been expending its financial strength in holding immense quantities of butter and keeping up the price. This policy appeared to answer for a time, but recently a "staggerer" came in the shape of abundant supplies of new butter and a great drop of prices in the United States, which forced a crisis with the firm of Hodgson & Co.

The true reason of the recent tumble appears to have been simply this—a well concerted attack, which for a time proved strong enough, to force up the price of butter by artificial means, and to create almost famine prices when the article was actually abundant and in immense supply. American operators took the lead in doing this, and now they are overloaded with "grease," for which they can find no market. If butter were an article that would keep for years, results generally might be different. But nine-tenths of all the butter, made in America at all events, keeps good for only a few months, after which it passes into the condition of "grease." Beyond all doubt, the back of the big butter speculation is now broken.

Mr. Hodgson has heretofore been a man of high character and very much respected in both social and commercial circles, in Montreal and elsewhere. But it may turn out that he has been making a gigantic mistake. Among the trade in Toronto it is currently reported that butter exporting houses here have during two years back found themselves compelled to drop out of the market and do nothing, simply because Mr. Hodgson and his agents were offering prices at which prudent men declined to "face the music."

What sense is there, anyway, in the business of bidding up prices of grain and provisions, on this continent, to figures which render impossible sales at a profit in Europe? The high prices that consumers have had to pay here recently do not come from natural causes, or only in very slight degree. They come mostly from the insanity of speculation. While we may regret the misfortunes of individuals, there is really cause for general rejoicing at the collapse of an attempt, continued over two or three years, to make butter dear to the public in the face of actual abundance of the article.

It is fortunate for Col. Pat Donan that he is a resident of far away Dakota instead of his native country, for if he were guilty in Ireland of the following language in speaking of its relations to England, he would probably find himself in the neighborhood of Kilmainham on rather short order. Speaking of the failure in congress of the bill to admit Dakota as a state, the doughty colonel says: "Dakota has been placed in the attitude of a professional begger, skinning around in dirty lobbies, pleading and whining for her own inalienable constitutional rights. I am tired of the whole business, and I think our duty now is simply to invite congress to go to the devil, and set up independently on our own hook. Dakota has domain enough, resources enough, material advantages of soil, climate and mineral wealth enough, to make an empire herself. She ought to hang the first fellow who goes, or proposes to go, to Washington on any begging expedition. With more territory than New England, New York, New Jersey and half of Pennsylvania combined; with more population than New Hampshire, Vermont, Delaware Florida and Nevada; with more daily papers than any three Southern states put together, and with more general intelligence among her people than is to be found in all the professional politicians of both parties at Washington, she has within herself everything necessary for a glorious homeland."

While little fault can be found with the quality of gas furnished in Toronto, we certainly think there is room for complaint regarding the price. Montreal gas is in no way inferior to ours, but the price there is only $1.70 a thousand feet, while here it is $2. Thirty cents is a pretty wide margin, considering that coal is cheaper in Toronto than at the commercial capital. Once more we think a consumers' protective association would be found a valuable institution.

The Buffalo Courier says:

The rapid advancement of Canada in importance may be measured by this fact Nowadays people talk about Canadian opinion. A dozen years ago there was nothing of the kind worth talking about.

Twelve years ago we were certainly not so insignificant as our contemporary insinuates, but there can be no doubt that Canada has made great strides in the last few years. Better evidence of its growing importance could not be found than in the fact that five or six of the leading magazines for the present month give up a large portion of their space to essays on the dominion. Among these may be mentioned the North American Review, Blackwood, Princeton, and the Fortnightly.

On Saturday a petition was filed in the court of appeal by James Stanley, Brighton, praying for the disqualification of Mr. J. M. Ferris, member of the legislature elect for East Northumberland. Various acts of personal bribery and a general indulgence in ways that are supposed to be peculiar to the corrupt followers of the chieftain are alleged against both the member elect and his too zealous supporters. This is, we understand, the first fruits of the late campaign for the local house. F. N. C. Titus, Brighton, and McCarthy & Co., are acting for the petitioner. Upwards of three thousand dollars are said to have been spent in the election.

For some time back reports from England have been frequent to the effect that there is to be a large emigration across the Atlantic during this year's season. Perhaps some of us may have been in doubt whether these reports were really founded on facts or got up for a purpose. All doubts on the subject may now, however, be dismissed, seeing that we have the prophecy of large emigration from a sure source. We learn by cable from Liverpool that, owing to the expected increase of emigration this season, the shipowners are holding a conference for the purpose of agreeing upon rates of passage. That settles it; for we know of course that it is not a reduction of rates which is contemplated. The action of the shipowners tells us the story beforehand with a considerable degree of certainty.

The franking privilege is a nuisance and a fraud. Members of parliament would not send through the mails one half the stuff they do if they had to pay postage. As a consequence not half the public documents that are printed would be required. One of the latest abuses is a canvassing circular for the "Dominion Annual Register and Review," franked all over the country by "J. J., M.P." Why doesnot the publisher buy postage stamps like others?

SERGEANT BALLANTYNE'S FROST.

Sergeant Ballantyne has been making merry over his disastrous failure as a lecturer upon this side of the water. If he had been half as humorous as it seems possible for him to be, he might have turned his failure into more than a moderate success. At a recent smoking concert at the Savage club in London, the Prince of Wales being one of the company, late in the evening, when mellowed by the cold Irish whisky toddies, of which he is particularly fond, the Sergeant said: "When I faced my audience I saw that I was to be measured upon my merits solely, and no friendship nor sympathy for my cause was to weigh one particle in the verdict to be pronounced. In fact the small, very small, audience, was come to pass judgment upon me rather than to be entertained and amused, and because of their number I may say they sat in banc. Well, the more I tried to speak the more I failed to say the right thing. I blundered and rambled, my stories got out wrong end on, and the result was that, as my audience grew colder, naturally enough I grew more embarrassed, and finally came to an abrupt close. That night I was to meet a gentleman who sought an appointment with a view of conducting a proposed tour through the Canadas. Well, I got at the hotel that evening a dispatch from him from a railroad station some distance out of the town, which he passed through on the way to his home in Montreal. It read: 'The part of your lecture which I heard to-night is a frost, I would not dare roast the Canadians with it.' I was in some doubt about the meaning of the words 'frost' and 'roast,' but I was in no state of uncertainty as to the meaning of the despatch. I did not take my 'frost' to Canada to 'roast' the people with." "And don't you think that the lecture I have delivered to-night would go down in America?" questioned Prior, who had been entertaining the company. "Like medicine, just," was the sergeant's reply "The fact is," he added, after wagging his coat-tail at the fire-place for a minute or two, "we Englishmen have too much of an idea of our own importance in the American eye. They are people of the most marked individuality, and they will not even respect what the Englishman is accustomed to revere. Why, I have no doubt that most of them will 'guy' the Angel Gabriel when he comes down. I am sure they will interview him and describe his horn in the newspapers."

THE REPRESSION BILL.

To the Editor of The World.

SIR: One of the evils which ensue from paternal governments and their paternal legislation is the tendency to loss of self-respect induced amid those legislated for. There are still, however, some few left who believe that law ought to "hold all men innocent until proved guilty,"—virtuous until proved vicious—entitled to rule each over his own body and faculties until utter misrule begins to interfere with the possibility of equal freedom in others. Under such conditions if a man loses his self-respect he can hardly blame anyone but himself; and to blame self, and self only, for loss of self-respect is the first step towards regaining it.

It is to be hoped we will outgrow it, but this young and vigorous dominion is troubled at present with a distressing irruption of pharisaism, which may have to be treated heroically some of these days, or this advocacy of laws which interferes with equal freedom, merely in order to obtain or maintain control of the voting power of a class, will cause our national politics to stink in the nostrils of all free and enlightened nations—will lose us their respect, and our own. It is not enough, it seems, that a majority should elect a government specially authorised paternally to teach us how to trade with each other, and fine us by protective tariffs every time we venture to trade outside our own boundary lines, attacking thus our self-respect by assuming that not one man in Canada can be trusted freely to purchase the supplies he needs. A further movement is now on foot to prohibit absolutely the use (but not the manufacture) of alcoholic liquors. Thus dealing, at close quarters, a still heavier blow, not only at our self-respect but also at our social freedom—nay, adding insult to injury by implying thus that all men are inherently drunkards, having no power of self-control but dependent wholly for sobriety upon legal restrictions. And now—deadliest blow of all—comes Mr. Charlton's threatened seduction bill, coolly attacking the self-respect of the women of Canada, telling them they are so effete in virtue, so chilled in heart and empty in brain, that their only hope of honorable existence lies in terrorizing men by placing seduction upon the criminal code as a "crime" in men but not in women—a crime not to be condoned even by marriage, for at the second reading this clause was struck out for some sapient reason not yet made plain.

That any set of legislators in this advanced period of the world's history could allow such a bill to be read a first time even, is an eloquent commentary upon the imperfect ideas of justice and individual rights which prevail in certain prominent sections of this so-called christian (!) community. Seduction is no interference with equal freedom. It is a sin of two, accomplished with the free consent of each. In this respect it differs from any sin which finds a place in our criminal statutes. As Professor Goldwin Smith says, every woman "knows that a promise is not marriage." Law already, and justly, protects women by criminal law against force, and by civil law against fraudful promise of marriage. To go further than this is to interfere alike with self-respect and equal freedom; nor could it be desired by any true woman.

Mr. Charlton's bill, if passed, would be utterly abortive of good and fruitful of evil. Cases of genuine seduction generally occur while the woman is a minor and has, consequently, no legal rights. Parents or guardians would thus be compelled to prosecute for her whether she desired it or not. Until the "rights" of minors are recognized by the law this is a direct interference with her freedom, enforcing the full exposure of her "crime" and the utter ruin of her young life. Her seducer would, nine times out of ten, save himself by flight, leaving her thus without hope even of pecuniary aid. It is a horrible view of the subject to contemplate, yet it must not be forgotten so long as children and minors are left absolutely at the mercy of parents and without any legal status that all parents do not become virtuous and moral by the mere fact of parentage. Amid the "adventurers" sometimes alluded to as likely to take advantage of the proposed enactment might be found some "parents" (not to be dignified with the sacred name of father or mother) willing to enforce by threats, or pander to, seduction of their offspring by wealthy profligates, for purposes of "blackmail." The opportunities afforded to designing women have already been sufficiently discussed elsewhere.

There is no cure for seduction except virtue, chastity, religion, care for others more than for self. In men and women alike this can be fostered by other than legal measures, but cannot be created by any act of parliament. The relations of the sexes are so hedged round with safeguards and natural, mental and moral penalties by a merciful and all-wise providence that law need do, can do, nothing but preserve equal freedom, leaving social, mental, moral or religious forces equally free thus to cope with and overcome the evil with good.

J. L. F.

Toronto, March 24th, 1883.

MR. STEWART CUMBERLAND AND THE CLERGY.

To the Editor of the World.

SIR: And so Mr. Stewart Cumberland has come and gone. And, no doubt, he has accomplished the purpose for which he came here, viz, to make money. And he deserves all he has made on account of the astuteness and business ability he has displayed in cajoling into his assistance so many of our city clergy. The first time I believe on our city records that they have stepped from their pulpits into the magician's platform to aid him in his deceptive tricks, some of which were so plain to many persons who composed the audience that in going home they performed them just the same without having had any explanation of them.

But why did our clergy take such an interest in the matter? Are they becoming materialistic in their ideas that they wish to shake any belief that our citizens may have in spiritualism? Don't they wish us to believe in in the story which we read in the holy scriptures of the spirit of Samuel being called by the witch of Endor to speak with Saul? Or that Moses and Elias spake with Christ in the presence of some of his disciples? Or because a magician can perform tricks so nearly resembling the phenomena that are believed in honestly by a large class of our population, do they wish us to disbelieve in the scripture record that Moses was the divine medium in bringing the plagues on Egypt, simply because the magicians by their enchantments brought forth a similar result?

Really, if the profession is growing so exceedingly materialistic, christianity must soon cease to be a spiritual religion. And if Mr. Cumberland is of such valuable assistance in the propagation of their orthodoxy, they had better recall him to give Sabbath evening entertainments in their churches

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