



## The Influence Of The Queen.

A paper read at the closing exercises of St. Boniface College, June 16th. 1897. By LAWRENCE DRUMMOND, B.A.

"The Queen is a very good woman, no doubt; but any goose able to hold a pen would do as well, for she is nothing but a signing machine."

You all have all heard this remark, Ladies and Gentleman, and perhaps believed it, so apt is a fallacy to gain ground by being repeated.

Allow me nevertheless to show that in this case the voice of the people is not the voice of truth. During these 60 years Her Majesty's influence has always been more or less potent in governing circles, and at critical moments has asserted itself most vigorously.

A more favorable circumstance than the celebration of her Diamond Jubilee could not be found for elucidating this fact.

In order to form an adequate idea of our Gracious Sovereign's function in the body politic, let us compare the Empire to a joint stock firm directed by a wealthy capitalist.

This personage places the management of the firm in the hands of a few well chosen managers, who take upon themselves all the wear and tear of the enterprise, which he supervises in a general way. Now and then he will give one of his subalterns a hint, but, tis his custom to allow them full scope in the every day run of business.

But should the spectre of bankruptcy loom on the horizon or should the firm be on the eve of embarking on a hazardous speculation our capitalist at once steps to the fore, and using the experience of a lifetime, succeeds in warding off the coming danger.

Now can any one call this shrewd overseer a nonentity, especially if he considers that the set of managers is always changing and that consequently they have barely time to become familiar with the work required of them, before they are turned out of office, while on the other hand the capitalist is continually adding to his knowledge. Would you say he is useless? Why, the day he would throw up his position, the firm's credit would begin to fail.

Her Majesty acts on the same lines. Instead of wasting her energy in trifles, she appoints cabinet ministers whom she entrusts with the discharge of current affairs. They may have it all their own way in matters of ordinary difficulty, they may indulge to their heart's content in party strife, without being handicapped by their sovereign. From her queenly heights she soars above the regions of routine administration and political dissensions. 'Tis beneath her dignity to be either whig or tory. This freedom from petty cares an advantage fully appreciated by persons alone whose lives have been worn away by them—enables her to concentrate her attention on matters of weight, such as colonial development and foreign relations—and on these two fields she focusses all her mental activity.

But the greatest of all advantages enjoyed by Her Majesty is the permanency of her situation. She is like unto the pyramids that ever rise up from the Egyptian wilderness, while

the mirages that hover for an instant in their vicinity, and then disappear in such quick succession, remind us of those cabinets supplanting each other with a bewildering alacrity.

Which of the two has most influence, those transient politicians, who hardly find themselves comfortably seated in the council chamber, before they vanish into nothingness, or the keen-sighted daughter of the Tudors, who is always there, an immovable manager, supervising and directing all important matters?

Even were she to refrain from ever giving an order, her experience alone would place her above the most enlightened and tassetmanlike premiers. She the Nestor of European statesmen, is more deeply versed in international complications that all the diplomatists of Europe put together. She is familiar with all the stratagems and sharp practices of every nation and every form of government. She has scrutinized the innermost causes of those revolutions, that for us are standing marvels, because our knowledge of them is derived from the scanty and carefully cooked scraps that are allowed to drift into the newspapers.

The reason of her ability is obvious. During these sixty years, Her Majesty has been in daily communication with the sovereigns, diplomats, and ambassadors of the world.

Her private correspondence, during the same period with the different governors rajahs, viceroys and premiers of the Empire would fill hundreds of volumes.

At one time it is a letter from Sir Robert Morier, of the British Embassy at St. Petersburg, relating a secret interview, in the course of which the czar has made disclosures closely connected with the welfare of the kingdom. At another, it is a despatch from Lord Elgin, viceroy of India, foreshadowing difficulties with some native prince. Then again the Queen herself will order the colonial Secretary to write to Sir George Grey, Government of Cape Colony, praising him for having saved India by sending reinforcements to Calcutta without waiting for instructions.

Like a general on the battle field, she is being constantly informed of every manœuvre, nothing is done without her consent; every despatch of importance passes through her hands and, according to the Prince Consort, there were 28,000 thousands of them in one year.

Imagine the inexhaustible mine of information that has been stored up by the Widow of Windsor during the course of this record reign. Why, one can hardly conceive a case intricate enough to puzzle her or to leave her without some means of dealing with it successfully. On the other hand, I beg of you to consider for a moment what pretensions as a ruler, a Rosebury a Salisbury or even Gladstone can exhibit, when he comes under the shadow of this living encyclopaedia, who held imperial sway while one was yet at the breast, the other unborn and the third just entering parliament; Alongside of their Queen, what do they know of the traditions of the Court of St. James? How can they penetrate the ultimate aims that actuate a foreign potentate, who for years may have been secretly conspiring against the safety of the

realm? Who will guide them in the choice of a great ambassador, when on the prudence of that choice rests the of Europe? Their very inexperience, therefore, obliges those temporary rulers to take counsel of a permanent authority, if they do not wish to blunder woefully.

Yet you would reduce to a mere figurehead, to a useless machine this oracle whom the sages of the land approach with awe to obtain enlightenment for the future.

The very prestige that hedges round Her Gracious Majesty is of itself a potent factor in the government of the kingdom. Simply on account of the priceless treasure of her knowledge and the uniform direction she imparts to successive cabinets, her presence is invaluable, even were she never to interfere in the management of the state.

Such however is not the case. Supposing a headstrong minister persists in thwarting his sovereign's will when some great interest is at stake, will he carry the day? Not necessarily though indeed he be vested, with temporary dictatorship. Royalty commands a thousand and one channels of influence through which it can act indirectly, till the most desperate resistance is overcome.

For instance, what prevents Her Majesty from interviewing separately the different members of the Cabinet and bringing pressure to bear on them, in order to convert them to her views.

What prevents her from sending a private cable to the premier of New South Wales or to the governor of Metabeleland, to put them on their guard against some ministers foolhardy plan? A word descending from the throne is often more effective than a shower of orders from Downing Street. Then again the permanency of her situation turns the balance in her favor. If one ministers bent on closing his ears to all her entreaties, she wait still this term is up, and sooner or later is sure of carrying her point with a more sympathetic cabinet.

So far we have supposed Her Majesty to attain her ends by acting indirectly on the governing staff; but should there arise a momentous question capable of imperilling the safety of the realm, she sometimes interferes with startling directness.

In 1864 Germany invaded Schleswig, one of Denmark's possessions. England was then very Danish in its sympathies owing to the recent marriage of the Prince of Wales with Princess Alexandra, "the sea-king's daughter from over the seas." Naturally that Bismarckian policy was strongly resented, and Lord Palmerston prepared for war. One British Squadron was to swoop down upon the Northern Coast of Germany, while another was to blockade Trieste and Venice. Garibaldi and Kossuth were to be subsidized with a million pounds each in order to stir up an insurrection that would keep Austria busy in Venetia and Hungary. Thus but a spark was needed to precipitate war and Palmerston was the man to light it. He drafted a blustering despatch threatening the courts of Berlin and Vienna with Britain's thunderbolts, if anything was attempted against Schleswig. Now in the strained relation existing between the two countries such a defiant attitude would have acted as a red flag waved before a mad bull.

Fortunately the Queen was on the look out, and when the despatch was submitted to her for approval she unhesitatingly refused to sign it. So Palmerston was compelled to modify its phraseology and the country was saved from the horrors of war through the timely intervention of its sovereign.

The celebrated "Trent" affair offered the Head of the Empire another occasion of damping the ardor of her bellicose minister. We know to what pitch rose the war fever in the British Isles, when it was rumored that a ship flying the Union Jack had been boarded on the high seas, and obliged to surrender two of its passengers, Mason and Slidell. No wonder Palmerston judged it was his time or never, to give vent to his warlike feelings. He was not long in addressing to Washington a note couched in most undiplomatic language. Had the original draft of this note reached its destination, the Northern States would have resented Lord Palmerston's words as an intolerable affront, and summoned Britain to a deadly strife. Torrents of blood would have flowed on either side, and two nations, united by ties of kindred, might have been at daggers drawn for centuries to come.

Happily the ever watchful sovereign of England made a determined stand in the interests of the two great English speaking nations.

Far from encouraging her premier's fiery rhetoric; she compelled him to strike out of his letter everything that could be construed as a menace. Then only was it forwarded to Washington where its moderate demands received due attention.

Were this the only service humanity owes the Queen, her reign should be proclaimed most beneficent; but besides these occasions few and far apart wherein the saving hand of royalty is clearly discernible, how often has the lady at the helm, in a silent way, averted incipient evils that might have swelled into great catastrophes!

These few remarks, Ladies and Gentlemen, will I trust, suffice to show that Her Majesty's influence in public affairs is very real and always exercised with the wisdom of consummate experience.

And, while wishing our beloved Sovereign many more years of wise guidance, we have every reason to be thankful that Divine Providence has cast our lot in an Empire, which, albeit the freest that was ever known, is at the same time dowered with the best blessings of monarchical rule.

### St. BONIFACE COLLEGE.

Closing Exercises and Presentations Of Medals.

Lieutenant - Governor Patterson Is Present and speaks.

The annual closing exercises and proclamation of prizes for St. Boniface College took place on Wednesday evening last, the 16th inst. in the college hall, His Honor Lieutenant-Governor Patterson presiding. The programme of the evening was an all-round success, demonstrating that the students of St. Boniface, while proficient in University matters also receive training in other branches.

The entertainment opened with a piano overture by Noel

Bernier, one of the best students in the college and the winner of many prizes. The following address was then read by Joseph Poitras.

To His Honour James Colebrooke Patterson, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba.

Your Honour,

The Faculty and Students of St. Boniface College are happy to welcome you here this evening. Last year you were so kind as to bestow on successful competitors in this college the three medals which you are yourself to distribute this year; but on the former occasion Your Honour was unavoidably detained in the East, while now your generous gift is enhanced by the presence of the giver. We beg therefore to tender to Your Honour our humble but very warm thanks for the encouragement thus afforded to deserving students.

The gold medal was offered to the Junior and Senior classes for a special examination in Natural History, over and above the University programme. One of the two silver medals is also awarded for extra studies not included in the curriculum of the University, namely, for an historical sketch of French Literature in the 17th century. The other silver medal goes to the pupil who has passed the best mathematical examination for entrance into the University course.

Your Honor will observe that, gratifying as our university record has been this year — since we captured the only two Greek scholarships, won the first place in pass Physics and Preliminary Latin, and had not even one partial failure among the many subjects taken by our twelve candidates — we have found time to cultivate other branches of learning and have been stimulated thereto by the munificence of one who has ever shown himself a patron of education and a friend of true culture.

Your Honor will likewise note with pleasure that, though our closing exercises occur almost a week before the Diamond Jubilee of our gracious Sovereign, we make more than one reference to that auspicious event. We need hardly add our loyal rejoicings over Her Majesty's wonderful reign as intensified by the presence here to night of one who so ably represents her in Manitoba.

Next came the presentation of medals, which were handed to the winners by His Honor Governor General's Bronze medal; Noël Bernier. Lieutenant Governor's Gold Medal for Natural History: Marius Cinq-Mars; honorable mention, Noël Bernier. Lieutenant-Governor's Silver Medal for historical sketch of 17th century French literature: Fortunat Lachance; honorable mention, Antonin Dubuc. Lieutenant-Governor's silver Medal for Mathematics: Elzéar Beaupré; honorable mention, Albert Dubuc.

The play that followed was a very clever comedy, "Les Soucis d'un Rentier—The Worries of a Fundholder," with A. Rousseau as Montaudoin, J. Poitras as Fernand, F. Lachance as Léonidas, G. Rocan as Pénuri, J. Arpin as Isidore, H. Hogue as Joseph, and, L. Laliberté as Lemartois Rousseau, the worried fundholder, depicted with admirable naturalness and facial expression the suspicions of a man who finds himself robbed of 37 sous every day for twenty years. He suspects every one but the real culprit, his brother Leonidas (Lachance), who also acted remarkably well and finally explained why he had thus systematically "economized on the sly" for the benefit of his nephew. All the actors did full justice to their parts. The audience were keenly interested from start to finish and frequently broke into laughter and applause.

A most touching valedictory (Continued on page 3.)