

The Federal Bastile.

The supposed necessities of the war in the neighbouring Republic have induced those in authority to adopt measures, but little anticipated a short time ago from such form of government

The following from the Montreal Commercial Advertiser will be read with no little surprise and indignation. We should be glad to find it were not true, at present we have no reason to suspect its correctness.

Mr. John I. Shaver, of Belleville, Canada West, who has been some months a prisoner in the Federal Bastiles, was discharged from Fort Lafayette on Monday last, and arrived here on Wednesday evening, en route for his home.

We have received the following particulars from him:—At the time of his arrest, he was acting as the south-western passenger agent for the Grand Trunk Railway, travelling upon the line, his headquarters being at Louisville, Kentucky. He was arrested at Detroit, in the cars, on an order from Secretary Seward, founded on information telegraphed by the Federal spy department at Montreal, on the 15th October. The charge against him was conveying arms and despatches to the rebels. On his arrest he was stripped naked, his clothes cut to pieces, and the soles of his boots cut off in search of despatches; his baggage was searched in a similar manner. No arms, no despatches, or anything that could warrant the inference that he had ever carried such things were found. He was, however, thrust into a dungeon among a number of negroes and other offenders of the vilest kind, to await the decision of Mr. Seward; on hearing that there was no evidence against him, the decision was that he was to be sent to Fort Lafayette.

On arriving at New York, Mr. Shaver was carried before Mr. Kennedy, of the police department, who on going into his case said that his arrest was an error, and that he would receive his freedom in a few days, there being nothing against him. In the meantime, however, he was conveyed to Fort Lafayette and immured in a casemate, dark and unventilated, with forty-eight other prisoners, in an atmosphere rendered pestiferous by the want of the common decencies of life. Although escape from the island on which the Fort is situated is impossible, the prisoners were deprived of liberty to take the air but for a short time each day. They were exposed also to the brutality of the officer in charge, a man named Wood, formerly a baggage man on the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad, and promoted by President Lincoln to his position as a reward for smuggling his baggage through Baltimore prior to his inauguration.

After he had been in the Fort a few days, an order was received from Mr. Seward directing Mr. Shaver's discharge upon his taking the oath of allegiance to the United States. Mr. Shaver refused freedom on these terms; he was a British subject, born in Canada, of parents who were British subjects, and descendants of N. E. Loyalists, and the filth of his dungeon and the brutality of his gaoler were preferable to an oath of fidelity to the United States.

When typhoid fever broke out in Lafayette, and the prisoners were dying so rapidly as to arouse public attention and produce an outcry of indignation, Mr. Shaver was removed to Fort Warren, in Boston harbor, where under charge of Col. Denmuck, he, in common with other prisoners, received humane treatment and every liberty and indulgence consistent with their position and safe keeping. By this time Lord Lyons had applied for Mr. Shaver's discharge, or that if there was any charge against him he should be brought to trial; and Mr. Shaver, was allowed to correspond with Lord Lyons, and to have interviews with the British Consul. All the communications from Mr. Shaver to Lord Lyons, and all Lord Lyons' replies, although bearing his signature on the envelope, and the seal of the legation, were opened before delivery; the former, indeed, had to be unsealed, and the latter cut open, lest the ambassador should discourse treason with the prisoner. Lord Lyons communicated the facts of Mr. Shaver's case to the British Government, and a demand was made by Lord John Russell for his trial or release.

Mr. Seward sent instructions for his discharge on condition that he would take an oath not to travel into any insurrectionary State, and not to carry on any communication in the United States or any other country with persons disloyal to the Federal Government. Mr. Shaver refused to accept his discharge on these terms; he was either guilty or innocent of the charge on which he was arrested; and he was prepared to accept trial with all its consequences, or unconditional release. In this resolve he was supported by Lord Lyons; and on the 6th January after nearly three months incarceration, the Federal government admitted that it had not a fraction of evidence against him, and discharged him unconditionally.

When the United States says as it will shortly have to pay, the bill for such acts as this, it will find that the unlawful arrest and imprisonment of British subjects is an amusement as expensive as to justify a little more consideration before practising it than Mr. Seward has shewn.

Among the refinements of cruelty in the Federal Bastiles, Mr. Shaver informs us that an order was read to them from Secretary Seward forbidding any prisoner employing counsel to obtain his release, and declaring that any such act would be regarded as an additional proof of guilt, for the majority of the political prisoners have been arrested on no juster grounds than Mr. Shaver.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Have the South grounds for Revolution?

In my last letter for the Messenger, I considered the argument for secession which the Southern States assume is contained in their Nation's Constitution, and showed conclusively that the right of Constitutional withdrawal can by no means be established. We now proceed to the inquiry whether the South may yet "throw themselves back on that 'higher law' which justifies any people in throwing off an intolerable yoke, in disowning a Government which ceases to employ its powers for the good of the governed? Such is no doubt the honest conviction of multitudes of the Southern people. But wherein lies the wrong? It can scarcely be in the acts of the National Administration, for in this the South has had from the beginning, according to its frequent and just boast, a paramount share.

Nearly all our Presidents have been men either elected from the South, or in whose favorable disposition the South has reposed full confidence; while the unity of Southern action on all questions specially affecting Southern interests has enabled us generally to overrule the decided counsels of the North. If our protective tariff has been a grievance to some portions of the South, it has been a vast benefit to others; while the policy, whether for good or for evil, originated with the South, and was, at the outset, opposed by the North. Let those in the Provinces who assume that if the South succeed in this Rebellion, they will establish with us a generous system of Free Trade ponder well the above fact. The writer from whom I have been quoting thus proceeds: "We need but refer to forts, navy-yards, custom-houses, harbor improvements, postal service. We need but point to the vast territories which have been obtained by purchase, or arms, or both, and annexed to the Southern Territory and made the depository of the Southern Institutions.

We may dismiss the complicated question of the territories by simply saying, that practically there has been hardly a foot of soil belonging to the United States, that was adapted to servile labor, of which slavery has not taken actual possession.

We are told by the South that we would hem in slavery, throw it back upon itself, prevent its expansion, and strangle and smother it within its pent up limits. Hem in slavery! Strangle it forsooth! Let the reader open the map of the United States, and look at Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, and practically New Mexico—regions out of which you might carve half a dozen Empires, with their magnificent rivers, their endless varieties of soil and climate, their exhaustless stores of agricultural and mineral wealth, look at this vast theatre on which slavery may expand at will,—and then tell us that it is hemmed in, and, 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd,' is perishing for want of breathing space!

In another point we grant that the South has not been without ground of complaint, but the grievance was moral, not political, and one which secession has no power to remedy."

This writer here refers to certain Northern abolitionists who "have been unmeasured in their denunciations of the South; and would have been apparently well pleased to see the Constitution annulled and trampled on, and slavery extinguished in the blood and flames of intestine war and servile insurrection." He adds however, that "the number of these philanthropic malignants could now be counted on one's fingers."

"We have to acknowledge also," he remarks, "that the South has had grounds to complain of portions of the Northern Church, who have too persistently interfered with the consciences and the duties of Southern Christians, and been unwise and unfraternal in their denunciations of slavery. * * * The evil is not to be cured by secession. For our brethren, we presume, do not intend, in receding from the State, to recede also from the Church. The truth is if the South are to secede for such a reason, they should have withdrawn from the Church instead of the State. They should have ruptured the ties of moral, instead of political brotherhood. Instead of disavowing their allegiance to the American President, they should have disowned their fealty, or compelled us to disown ours—to our common Redeemer.

We conclude then, and we have looked honestly to find it, that the South has no right of secession, either constitutional or revolutionary. It is not nominated in the bond, and it is not created by any sufficient violations of that bond on the part of the Northern States.

The question, however, recurs, 'Grant all this, yet if the Southern people wish to go, is it not better to let them? * * * Desolating war will be the price of coercion, and after all the desolation coercion will be impossible.' This view, plausible on the surface, and appealing to the natural sympathies of every Christian and every benevolent heart, is entitled to the most candid examination.

We reply, therefore, first, that had a large and important section of the country become unanimously disaffected with our political institutions, and signified in a calm and peaceful way their desire to shake them off, we believe that the expression of their desire would have been met by the most full and generous consideration of their claim. But in the first place, it should be remembered that in the act or desire of secession, the South has not been unanimous. Since the origin of the secession movement, five Southern States have given a popular majority, declaring their preference to remain in the Union. * * * The manner in which secession was accomplished proves that it was a conspiracy on the part of the leaders, and that they had no confidence in the unanimous desire of their own people to dissolve their federal allegiance.

But look again: Suppose we have yielded to the demand of the South, and allowed them to depart as peacefully as was consistent with all those acts of virtual war which signalized their departure. Have we any guarantee of peace? Will the South, encouraged by this confession of national weakness, or tameness, desist from further demands, or lower their tone of defiance? * * * Are we not compelled to believe that nothing but an armed demonstration on the part of the North has saved us our capital—the home of our government?"

A very different conclusion the above from that involved in the following sentences of "Pacem," a recent contributor to the pages of the Messenger, and to the cause and course of the South. These are his words: "Say the Northerners, if secession be allowed, we have no government or country. What do they mean? That Jeff. Davis intends to subdue and subjugate the North? The Confederacy acknowledges the Federal government, and wishes to be acknowledged in turn." It is strange that sensible men, especially those at all acquainted with the history of the Southern Rebellion—with the march of the Southern army towards Washington immediately on the fall of Sumter, and the threats of so high an official as the Secretary of War at Montgomery, and the declaration of Mr. Stevens, the Vice-President of "the extemporized Republic," the latter menacing Washington, the former not simply Washington, but Faneuil Hall, Boston,—passing strange that, in the face of such facts, sensible men should believe that the notoriously perfidious South intended at the outset of their rebellion to act as they are now acting, simply on the defensive, or that Jeff. Davis was sincere in his recent official assertion, "All we ask is, to be let alone." His antecedents, as well as those of his brother conspirators, may well admonish the Northern States to "provide for the future."

We must, however, let our far pleader for the South and the North proceed. He goes on to say:

"But the South seceded partly because the North refused her equal rights in the Territories. Is it conceivable that, in leaving the Union, she will acquiesce in any arrangements that will deprive her of these territories altogether? Assuredly not. She will demand the relinquishment of the Territories. Another count in the indictment is our violation of the law regarding fugitive slaves. Canada being now brought down to the very Southern border, the South will demand adequate treaty stipulations for the return of her fugitives from compulsory service; and we shall have to yield, not as a matter of national comity, but under the threat of our 'smelling Southern powder and feeling Southern steel'."

Rather different these conclusions too, from the following of your correspondent "Pacem." "The interests of the slaves," he remarks, by way of assertion, "also require secession. * * *

The North, when separated from the South, will certainly protect the slave, and not the slave-holder." This "certain protection of the slave" will vanish in the event of the successful secession of the South. They will by no means allow the whole North, if they can avoid it, to become another Canadian asylum for their fugitive slaves. True this latter is an assertion. But which is the more probably correct prediction?

Our writer thus proceeds: "But again, the grant of secession involves the destruction of the government. Allow a dozen States thus to break away from the Union, and what guarantee had we for the continued adhesion of the rest? In the very heart of the Union, if Union there be, may spring up a Republic, or a Monarchy, of Norwegians, of Germans, of Irishmen, forming their separate treaties with domestic or foreign powers. And taking the soberest view, what functions of a Nation can we any longer discharge after making such a concession?—What treaty can be entered into with foreign powers, by States, not one of which may remain to fill its pledges? * * * But besides the demand "of the South" is wicked; it involves sacrifices which the South have no right to ask of us. We are required to let them go without a semblance of legal or moral right.—They carry with them Florida, which we bought from Spain. They carry with them Louisiana, which we bought from France, and which we took into the Union with an express provision binding her to it forever. They carry with them the control of the navigation of the Mississippi, which floats the commerce of half a continent.—

We might let South Carolina, and Georgia and Virginia go; they came into the Union as original equals. But there is something inexplicably cool in demanding that vast regions, occupying points vital to the interests of the country, and therefore purchased at an immense cost by the people of the country, should be allowed at any moment, and for any reason, or for no reason, to snap their fingers in the face of the country and secede. The proposition is too monstrous to be entertained. For such reasons, among many others, we believe it the imperative duty of the government to put down, if it can, the present conspiracy and allow the hundred thousands of still loyal men in the Southern States to return to a peaceful allegiance."

Thus much in behalf of, or for and against—the cause and course of the South. I verily believe that the writer from whom I have so largely quoted, has ably and candidly and fairly represented his Southern brethren. It is now time that the Northern States should be allowed an impartial hearing. In my next, let the North plead their own cause, and, if they can, justify their course in regard to the Southern Rebellion.

A. C.

For the Christian Messenger.

Gaelic Mission in Cape Breton.

DEAR BROTHER,

Our Gaelic Chapel is paid for. Bro. D. W. C. Dimock will be glad to learn this, and Bro. C. H. H., I know is not sorry either. It is pleasing to worship in a house free from debt.—We desire to thank our friends in Nova Scotia for this pleasure.

We have good meetings in connexion with the Mission in that locality. Pray for us, that the good Lord may favour us by bringing many into the fold of the Church.

I have received the box of clothing sent by the Nictaux Church to be distributed among those who are destitute of clothing. The poor people desire to express their gratitude through your valuable paper. They say you care for our souls and bodies.

We read in the good Book of those who made "coats and garments" for the poor.

Yours truly,

HUGH ROSS.

North Sydney, C. B., Feb. 10th, 1862.

For the Christian Messenger.

Obituary Notice.

MR. DICKIE ARCHIBALD,

Son of Daniel and Rebecca Archibald, of Upper Stewiacke, Colester Co., resigned his mortal life Nov. 4th, 1861, at the age of 21.

Endowed with a more than ordinary, robust, physical constitution, and possessed with great power and energy of mind, such as awakened a bright hope in the hearts of all his friends, that a great work would be accomplished through him, it becomes a peculiarly sad duty to compose this last tribute to his memory. Yet it is but a crumb of sorrow mixed with a mass of joy, for every thought of his triumphant departure fills the soul with rejoicing. He was one of those whom the Lord called early into His fold below and proportionably early into His blest fold above.—Nine years ago, God sent a man—David McKeen, from Acadia College, with the heavenly manna to distribute to his scattered few in that settlement. It proved indeed, the bread from Heaven. Zion partook eagerly and was glad; and 15 immortals tasted for the first time with great rejoicings.

The writer, as well as the subject of this brief sketch, was one of those happy ones; and when he calls to mind that sweetest period in his pilgrimage, which has shed a light upon all after times, he will never forget to exalt Him, who, at the age of 12 years, took this dear departed one from the grasp of the enemy, and gave him a clear title to the mansion he now occupies.—About 2 years before his death, he became much awakened to a sense of the vastness and solemnity of the Christian life and labor, and buckled on God's armour afresh for the contest. Having obtained a good intellectual training, partly at the Normal School, he gave himself up to the glorious and God-pleasing work of training the young, an employment only surpassed by the work of Christ's especial ministers, into which he fondly fancied himself, after plodding his way over the rough road that leads to so exalted a terminus, he might arrive. In this work he displayed an earnest spirit; and though he felt the vast superiority of lodging in the tender mind the seed of sacred truth, his morning and evening earnest prayers and simple explanations of God's holy word give ample testimony. Fifteen miles was no hindrance to very many in that community standing around his bed of intense suffering to shed the valued tears of sympathy. Teachers of the young, if you wish like comfort in your last hours, let the soul's highest interests of those under your charge rest upon your hearts.

He is gone! The little school house echoes not with his voice. The last truth has been borne from his lips to the ears and hearts of those dear ones. The lambs must have another guide, or they will wander. The home of his youth—the sick chamber that bore witness to the triumphs of grace amid his great sufferings for nearly four months,—the Church of Christ,