

The Politician.

The Colonial Press.

From the Montreal Witness.

STRANGE TIMES IN CANADA.

We live in strange times. The Montreal Herald, one of the oldest and most influential papers in Canada, after approaching the subject by various lines of circumvallation, has opened in favor of Annexation. The Montreal Gazette, another long established paper, prefers independence; but both are equally decided that there is no use in attempting to 'tinker up' the old order of things. The Gazette thinks that instead of being Tories, Radicals, &c., we should all be Canadians—have the Upper as well as Lower House of Assembly elected by the free voice of the people, and our own questions decided amongst ourselves, without reference to a country so far off, and which can know so little about us as Britain. The Courier was earlier in the field, and is quite as decided for a new order of things as either the Herald or the Gazette. The Pilot is not averse to discuss the annexation question, but says this should be done in a calm and philosophical manner. The Avenir and Montreal Canadian both speak as if the question was settled, and only waited its consummation. The Melanges Religieux, and the Minerve, formerly the organ of the Canadian insurrection, and lately of the present administration, together with the Transcript, come out strongly in favor of maintaining the British connection. In Quebec, the Gazette, the oldest paper in Canada, is evidently friendly to annexation, as are, we believe, the Chronicle and the Canadian Independent,—the Canadian saying little on the subject. We may add, that the Sherbrooke Gazette has evidently a warm side towards American connection, which may also be said of most of the few other papers in Lower Canada. Nor is it at all to be wondered at that the newspapers here are nearly unanimous in favor of some great and thorough change; for such a sentiment is, so far as we have opportunities of judging, nearly universal among their subscribers and supporters. The feeling continues increasingly to be, that things cannot go on with peace, comfort or prosperity as they are, and that nothing but some great change can give the country a fair start again. It may be thought in Western Canada that none but Tories entertain such sentiments, but many of the strongest supporters of the present Ministry here are, we believe, among the strongest annexationists.

We allude to these things, not for the purpose of offering any speculations upon the questions involved, but as items of news with which our readers have a right to be acquainted; and although we do not deal much in *on dit*, yet we have heard it confidently affirmed, by gentlemen professing to know the fact, that the leaders of the British American League, though chiefly of the class heretofore called Tories, have resolved to discard their Tory predilections, as unsuitable to the times or the emergency, and adopt a platform of perfect civil and religious liberty and equality for all classes, creeds and origins of the community. To which it is said they will add a few such sweeping declarations as—no Established Churches,—no Tithes,—no Ecclesiastical Corporations, with power to buy up the lands of the country,—no institutions or rulers but what spring from the free election of the people,—and great economy in the public service. Should they do this, it may prove like what we have seen before in Britain, when the Tories, under Sir Robert Peel, carried much more sweeping measures of reform than the Whigs or Reformers, under Lord John Russell, had ever thought of proposing.

Whatever truth there may be in these reports, or whatever importance may be attached to the various signs of the times we have indicated, no one can deny that Canada is in a very peculiar position at present, and that it behoves the Lord's people to be much in prayer, that He would direct all events for His glory, and the good of this distracted land.

People at a distance who see no cause for such a revolution in public opinion here but the passage of the Rebellion Losses measure, may, however, find it difficult to believe newspaper reports concerning the change indicated above, without a word or two of explanation, which it may be well to append by way of showing the position of Lower Canada.

1st. The British Corn Laws acted not only as a protection or bounty upon grain grown in Canada, but upon American grain ground in Canada, and brought the whole that was so grown or ground down the St. Lawrence, thus creating a very great trade here. Now the abrogation of these laws has greatly reduced the value of our staple, which, besides, finds its way to a considerable extent to the American shipping ports, under the operation of the United States warehousing system, whilst very little American grain comes this way—the price in New York being usually higher.

2d. The differential duties that until recently existed in Canada, acted as a protection or bounty to British manufactures, or goods that came through Britain, all of which entered Canada by the St. Lawrence, and gave a great trade to the commercial cities of Lower Canada; but these differential duties were repealed in accordance with the public sentiment of Western Canada, in order that the merchants of that section might import from New York at the same rate of duty as from Britain. Add to this, the American Government, perceiving a favorable juncture to secure the carrying trade, passed a bonding and warehousing act, by which goods could be imported either by

Canadian merchants from Britain via New York and other ports, and passed through the United States in bond, or imported by American merchants and sold to Canadian merchants in bond, i. e., without having paid any American duty. In this way a large share of the trade of Western Canada now goes to New York. Now the simultaneous operation of these two causes has in a great measure turned away the streams of commerce from Montreal, and left it for the time high and dry; and as a natural consequence, many of the best and most enterprising of the population are leaving it, and those who remain find themselves exceedingly poor, and in the very disagreeable predicament of being unable to support the various churches, benevolent or religious societies, or other institutions with which they are connected. It is chiefly, however, by the owners of houses, stores, and other real estate, which they can scarcely either sell or let, that the weight of depreciation is felt; and with them the question of annexation, or some change that will restore trade and population to Montreal, is a question of almost life and death. Mechanics or merchants may go after business, but he whose all is in real estate must stay and make the best of it, and though he should, as we believe is the case with our Montreal proprietors, have no particular dislike to monarchical institutions, or particular love for republicanism, yet he would rather enjoy a comfortable income as a Republican than starve as a Royalist.

Montreal and Quebec are in the false position of being deprived, by the action of Great Britain and Canada West, of the artificial advantages upon which they were built up, whilst, owing to their separation from the United States, by an imaginary line, they are not allowed to profit by their natural advantages. It will thus be seen that there are important considerations stirring the minds of men here besides the Rebellion Losses measure.

But it may be asked, how would annexation promote business in Canada? and this is answered by some of our shrewdest men as follows:—1st. A glance at the map shows the St. Lawrence to be the natural outlet, not only of Canada, but of all the North Western States contiguous to the great lakes; the greatest food producing country in the world; and were Canada and the United States one, there is no doubt that this, the best channel to the ocean, would be the most used, and the same export trade which has built up Buffalo, Albany and New York, would build up St. Catharines, Kingston, Montreal, and Quebec.

2d. No country, perhaps, in the world, offers a more docile, easily managed, economically living people, to carry on manufactures than Lower Canada, in which both labor and water privileges are abundant and cheap; and therefore were we upon the same footing with Massachusetts and the other manufacturing States of the Union, there can be no doubt that new Lowells, Fall Rivers, and Lawrences, would spring up among us, as if by magic. Indeed, one of our largest capitalists and shrewdest men here, has hinted that if he had twice as much money he would invest it all in property in Montreal at present prices, and quietly wait for annexation to increase its value many fold.

In conclusion, we would offer a word of apology to those of our readers with whom British connexion is a passion, and who, not having felt the pressure on the pocket that exists here, retain that passion unimpaired. Such we know will blame us for speaking of this matter at all, but if the fact of a very great change in public opinion be, as we have stated, would it be wise either in us or them to shut our eyes to it? And besides, though our own personal sympathies and feelings are strongly on the side of Great Britain, yet we are of those who think Governments were made for the people, and not the people for Governments; and that the best Government for a people is that under which it will be best circumstanced for personal comfort and social advancement. Whether independence or annexation to the United States would secure these advantages in a greater degree than we enjoy them at present, is a question into which we cannot now enter. There are certainly many objections to and difficulties in the way of either change, to the most prominent of which we have heretofore adverted, and may again recur.

Editor's Department.

MIRAMICHI:

CHATHAM, TUESDAY, JULY 24, 1849.

The Subscriber having been compelled to consume a large amount of time, and incur considerable expense, in his too often fruitless endeavours to collect his far-spread Outstanding Debts, hereby notifies all persons to whom he is not indebted, and with whom he has not a running account, that orders for advertising in the Gleaner, and for Printing in future, must be accompanied with the CASH otherwise they will not meet with attention.

JAMES A. PIERCE.

CANADA.—We are sorry to learn by the Quebec papers that cholera was doing its work in that city, cutting off many victims. The Chronicle of the 12th inst., contains the following account of a disgraceful riot which had occurred in that city on the previous evening:—

RIOT AND WANTON DESTRUCTION.—Last night about nine o'clock, persons to the

number of about two thousand, riotously disposed, assembled in front of the police barracks in Champlain street—the Customs Building—and without ceremony entered and demolished, yelling and hooting all the time, everything that could be broken, doors, partitions, stair-railing and windows; the few policemen who were lodged in the house were compelled to make a speedy retreat. The military were not turned out; the people could not prevent the destruction; the Police Magistrate is in Montreal, obtaining information concerning a riot which occurred in that city; Mr Symes, J. P. interfered, in the hope of checking the destruction; but we regret to learn was assaulted, and severely cut and injured about the head.

The design of the board of health to convert the house into a hospital for cholera patients, was the cause of the destruction.

This riot is to be regretted and strongly censured; the end contemplated by the Board of Health was a good one; the preservation of life by providing as convenient a place as could be obtained, for the reception of poor people, suddenly afflicted with sickness; we do not mean to say that there might not have been a better situation for a hospital; but certainly there could have been none more convenient for the Champlain Street population. The riot is not excusable on any grounds, though we may attribute it to a fear of the disease spreading in the vicinity of a Pest House. But facts are against this supposition. Some of the London hospitals are in the heart of the city, and the inmates of the surrounding houses are seldom, if ever, afflicted with epidemic diseases; they seem to be particularly exempt; we merely allude to the fact; the exemption may be accounted for philosophically, or it may be simply an arrangement of Providence.

The destruction is to be regretted on other grounds. The city must pay for the damages. The inhabitants of Champlain street had a right to remonstrate against the intended use of the Customs Building, and had a remonstrance been made in the proper quarter, we are sure both the Board of Health and the City Council would have attended to a just complaint.

In speaking of the progress of the disease, the same paper of the 13th says:—

There was a number of deaths yesterday, which fear has materially exaggerated. We have no correct information on the subject; but in a day or two we trust to be able to give a correct report, which will tend in a great measure to relieve the public mind. Should there be a change of weather we would earnestly recommend the putting on of flannels and warm clothing.

Some other sudden deaths have occurred since yesterday, viz:—Mr de Moizan, a barber of the Cul de Sac, Mr Cassault, Carriage maker, of St. Roch's Suburbs, Miss Ashworth, Aunt of Mr Ashworth, latter, of this city.

We regret to hear that Austin Cuvillier, Esq., of Montreal, died yesterday. The death of Mr Gibson, stationer, is also mentioned.

We regret to learn that Mrs Chabot, wife of Jean Chabot, Esq., M. P. P., died last night.

A late Montreal paper has the following satisfactory bulletin of the Board of Health in that city:—

Notwithstanding the many flying reports, and the dropping off unexpectedly of a citizen here and there, we believe we are fully warranted in stating that there is nothing of disease existing which ought to produce alarm in the public mind. The differences in the opinions of medical men, and even of the Local and Central Boards of Health, are most perplexing. But if a convincing fact be necessary to calm any nervous feeling that may exist, we have that fact more fully established by the table we annex below. The Central Board of Health have ordered that the Local Board do publish a report daily of such cases of Cholera or sudden disease as may arise. The Board say that they cannot come at any satisfactory data for such report, owing to the difference in the opinion of Medical gentlemen, and to relieve them from a difficulty not yet very resolvable they have as a *dernier resort*, concluded to refer the matter to the most solid of all earthly authorities, viz—the sexton. From the comparative statement of deaths in the city of Montreal during the years 1848-9, from May 29 to July 9 in both years, covering a period of six weeks in each, it will be seen that upon the aggregate, forty seven more persons died in 1848 than have died during the present warm and exciting season. And what is very remarkable, the numbers during the week ended 9th instant, are the same in both years. It will therefore be seen from these statistics, the best of all data, that there ought to exist no alarm whatever.

The Quebec Chronicle of the 16th inst., (the latest paper obtained by the Mail,) speaks of the health of that city in the following cheering manner:—

We are glad to learn that within the twenty four hours past, the public health has decidedly improved; A medical friend has just suggested to us the propriety of urging upon our readers attention to clothing, in consequence of the sudden change of temperature, to wear warm clothing and flannel, keeping the chest and stomach warm. Attend to the premonitory symptoms.

GENERAL SCOTT AND CANADA.—The following letter from the above well known American officer, to a gentleman in Sara-

toza, who communicated the same for publication in a paper printed at that place, appears in the American Journal. General Scott is well acquainted with the people and country on both sides of the line, and his opinion on such an important subject is well worthy of consideration.

WEST POINT, June 29, 1849.

MY DEAR SIR,—The news from the Parliament of Great Britain, this morning, must, I think, increase the discontent of our neighbors on the other side of the St. Lawrence and the Lakes not a little; and that those discontents will, in a few years, lead to a separation of the Canadas, New Brunswick, &c., &c., from the Mother Country, seems equally probable.

Will those provinces form themselves into an independent nation, or seek a connection with our Union? I think the probability is greatly in favor of the latter. In my judgment the interests of both sides would be much promoted by annexation—the several Provinces coming into the Union on equal terms with our present thirty States. The free navigation of the Saint Lawrence is already of immense importance; perhaps a third of our present population, and would be of great value to the remainder. After annexation two revenue cutters, below Quebec, would give us a better security against smuggling, than thirty thousand Custom-house employees strung on the line that separates us from the British possessions on our continent. I am well acquainted with that line, and know a great deal of the interests and character of the Provincials. Though opposed to incorporating with us any district densely peopled with the Mexican race, I should be most happy to fraternize with our northern and north eastern neighbors.

What may be the views of our Executive Government on the subject, I know absolutely nothing; but I think I cannot err in saying that two thirds of our people would rejoice at the incorporation, and the other third soon perceive its benefits.

Of course, I am opposed to any underhanded measures, on our part, in favor of the measure, or any other act of bad faith towards Great Britain. Her good will, in my view of the matter, is only second to that of the Provincials themselves—and that the former would soon follow the latter—considering the present temper and condition of Christendom—cannot be doubted.

The foregoing views I have long been in the habit of expressing in conversation. I give them to you for what they may be worth.

Faithfully Yours,

WINFIELD SCOTT.

BERMUDA.—The Bermuda Herald of the 5th inst., furnishes the following account of a disastrous affair which occurred on board one of the hulks at Ireland Island:—

An Inquest was held on Tuesday last, on board the Medway, Convict Ship, by Charles C. Keane, Esq. Coroner, on view of the bodies of Thomas Kerrigan and John Tobin, who had been shot. The following is the substance of what was elicited before the Jury.

The four or five hundred Convicts on board the Medway were assembled that morning on the spar deck (the forward part of the ship,) to witness the punishment of one of their number, James Cronin, for malicious conduct. The overseer, F. B. Black, Esq. and his officers, with the Convict Guards, fully armed, and their pistols being loaded with ball cartridge, (the usual practice, we believe) were drawn up on the quarter deck—they numbered 20 in all. The Medical Officer was also present. The quarter deck is divided from the spar deck by a railing about five feet high.

The man to be flogged had a brother on board the ship, older than himself, who had permission from the overseer to absent himself from witnessing the punishment; but this kindly offer on the part of Mr. Black was refused, and he appeared with the other prisoners.

When the proper officers were in the act of securing the men to the gratings or ladder, his brother rushed forward, and leaping on the barrier and waving his hat, called to him by name. He (the elder Cronin) then addressed some words in Irish to the convicts, which was answered by a wild cheer, and a rush of some 250 to the barrier, upon which they clustered like bees, preparatory to a descent upon the quarter deck. The men were desperately excited. The overseer waved his hand, and called to the men to 'fall back!' which order was quite disregarded. Mr. Black (plainly perceiving what must be the object of the prisoners, viz: the rescue of Cronin, and the probable butchery of himself and his small party) gave orders to the Guards to fire, which was immediately followed by a volley from the front rank. This had not any immediate effect—the desperate men entertaining the idea that only blank cartridges were fired. The rear rank of the guards—which had been kept in reserve, then moved to the front, and, under orders from Mr. Black, fired. Two of the malicious convicts fell dead, and twelve were wounded. This instantly quelled the motley—the men hurriedly retreating to hiding places about the forward part of the ship.

The punishment was then administered to the younger Cronin.

After a lengthy investigation, the Jury unanimously returned a verdict of 'Justifiable Homicide.'

One of the wounded men died on Tuesday