

A RECENT number of the *Montreal Gazette* has a well-written and cogent article in advocacy of the proposal to establish a Dominion Teachers' Association. The arguments in favour of such an organization are many and convincing. The crucial question, it seems to us, is that of its practicability. In view on the one hand of the magnificent distances which separate not only the extremes of the Dominion, but even its older provinces, from each other, and, on the other hand, of the smallness of the salaries and the resulting impecuniosity of the great body of the Public School teachers, there is reason to fear that great difficulty would be experienced in securing the attendance of representatives of the classes of teachers for whom such an Association would be most desirable and most profitable. As, however, the Association would probably be composed mainly or wholly of accredited representatives, it may be that this initial difficulty could be overcome by making the local "institutes," or "conventions," the electoral constituencies. These might appoint delegates, paying their expenses and receiving their reports. But this is a matter of detail. The *Gazette* dwells at some length on what it regards as the chief obstacle, namely, that likely to arise from the unwillingness of the Roman Catholic educationists, the French-speaking portion of them especially, to unite in such a congress, and the language barrier by which the latter would be, in so many cases, debarred from free intercourse with their English-speaking colleagues. The *Gazette*, which has good opportunities for forming an opinion, is not without hope that neither of these difficulties would be found insuperable. It may not be amiss to add that the excellent effect which such an intermingling of teachers, representing the two races and languages, would almost surely have in breaking down prejudices and promoting a desire to acquire each other's language, affords in itself a strong incentive to the formation of the proposed Association. Another indirect benefit, somewhat similar in kind, would result from the extension of inter-provincial acquaintanceship. It is unfortunately too true that the people of the different provinces, after so many years of federation, are, to a large extent, strangers not only to each other, but to each other's local institutions and characteristics. The direct advantages that would surely result to the profession are too numerous to be recapitulated here. Fortunately, they are too obvious to need recapitulation. The unwise tendency to measure themselves by themselves and their systems and methods by the same rule, is but too marked in the teachers of Ontario, and probably in all the other provinces. The educators in each have something to learn from those of every other, as a few free gatherings of the kind indicated would soon make clear. We do not know how wide or catholic the scheme is as it exists in the minds of its projectors, but we take the liberty of suggesting that it would not be beneath the dignity of the professors in our colleges and universities to come together annually for the interchange of ideas and experiences. The plan which works so well in the Ontario Teachers' Association, in accordance with which, in addition to the general meetings in which all unite, the Public School, the High School, and the Inspectorial representatives meet in their respective sections, would, we dare say, be found convenient in a Dominion Association. The presence of representatives from the University Faculties should add much to the dignity and usefulness of the annual conventions. We have, moreover, no doubt that by coming together for mutual conference in a Professorial section, the dignitaries representing the various Faculties might find that they still have something to learn from each other. It is not indeed beyond the bounds of the conceivable that even a member of the Professoriate of one of the State universities might, on occasion, not disdain to get a useful hint from some humble professor in a one-horse college—not to say from a High or Public School teacher. And surely such should have much to impart that would be of great educational value.

TO what end will the insatiable curiosity of the public stimulate the newspaper reporters and other purveyors of unwholesome food for morbid palates? Can anything be more offensive to healthful tastes, not to say to good morals, than the exhibitions heralded by such announcements as those which inform the people of Toronto when and where they may feast their eyes on a ghastly *fac-simile* of the murdered Benwell as he appeared in the Blenheim swamp? Of a different, but still scarcely elevating kind, is the sentiment which is ministered to by the genuine or invented letters and stories from the pen of a convict whose biography, written under the shadow of the gallows, has now, we are

informed, been bought at a handsome price, and will shortly be given to the public in serial form in one of our leading newspapers. It is sad to think of all the collateral evil which, in addition to the misery directly caused, is wrought by the commission of a great crime, in these days of universal publicity. Who can gauge the deleterious effects wrought upon many minds, especially upon those of the young, by the familiarity with crime and moral depravity that will be gained in connection with the trial and execution of such a convict? It is not to be wondered at if in many cases the baseness and cruelty of the deed are lost sight of, and the criminal who occupies so much space in the newspapers and in the public eye becomes transformed in the youthful imagination into a hero. It is by no means inconceivable that the glamour of such popularity may sometimes even tempt the weak-minded to achieve notoriety by some similar deed. It is, indeed, worthy of consideration whether the injurious effects of all this publicity should not constitute one strong argument in favour of the abolition of the death penalty, on precisely the same grounds on which the change from public to private executions was based. If, as all now admit, it was demoralizing to have a crowd come together to see how the poor wretch bore himself beneath the gallows tree, it can hardly be doubted that an effect somewhat similar in kind must be produced by this constantly keeping before the mind the picture of the condemned man in his cell, and of the courage and fortitude with which he may await his fate. Newspaper enterprise will yet, it is not unlikely, compel the abolition of the death penalty.

NOTHING is more natural than that the members and intimate friends of the Birchall family, on both sides the Atlantic, should bring to bear all the influence within their reach in order to obtain, if possible, a commutation of the sentence passed upon the wretched man. Hard, indeed, would be the heart that could refrain from responding with deep sympathy to the appeal of the unhappy wife. A situation of more intense suffering than that which has fallen to her lot it would be impossible to conceive. But it must be obvious to every one, on a moment's reflection, that considerations such as these cannot and should not have any effect in staying the hand of justice. The cases are unhappily rare in which any culprit undergoes the last penalty of the law without breaking the heart of mother, or wife, or sister, or other fond relative. The only consideration, so far as we can see, which could warrant executive clemency, would be some lingering shade of doubt with regard to the conclusiveness of the evidence, and such doubt, if existent, would weigh in the direction of pardon rather than of commutation. Painful though it is to say it, it is manifestly impossible for those who believe that the verdict was amply justified by the evidence to point to a single palliating circumstance, on which to base an appeal for commutation. While we are by no means certain that there may not be a better way to deal with even the worst of criminals than to slay him, nothing can be clearer than that the efficacy of this as of every other form of punishment depends very largely upon its certainty. Better far to abolish it than to use it capriciously. As to the sensational letter in which the unknown "Colonel" confesses himself the murderer, it bears absurdity on its face. That Birchall should be willing to give his life in order to save a miserable partner in fraud, who has no more manliness than to suffer another to die for his crime, is inconceivable. It seems improbable, if not impossible, that Birchall himself could have, as some of the newspapers suggest, concocted the fraud. If his keepers have been faithful to their trust, he has lacked opportunity. It is far more likely that the letter is the transparent device of some disreputable acquaintance—and such he appears to have had—who has taken this means to aid, as he hopes, in securing a reprieve.

THE report of the British Farmers' Delegates, who recently made the tour of the Provinces of the Dominion, will be looked for with interest by those whom they visited as well as by those who sent them. It was a happy thought that led the Dominion Government to suggest the sending of such a delegation. Whatever may be said or believed in regard to other kinds of immigration, all must agree that we cannot have too large an influx of skilled tillers of the soil, especially of those who bring with them capital enough to enable them to make a fair start. We are, moreover, so well assured of the capabilities of the soil and climate of Canada for the production of the staples of the world's food that we feel safe in challenging the closest

investigation. The practical knowledge and high intelligence of these visitors, and the fact that they took a reasonable time for acquainting themselves with the qualities of the soil and the productions of the different localities they visited, afford ample guarantee that their report will be truthful and discriminating. Without pluming ourselves too much beforehand on the presumably favourable conclusions they may have reached, we are assured that nothing but good can result from their investigations. No true Canadian has any doubt that one of the chief disadvantages from which his country suffers is the fact that it is not sufficiently well known amongst the right classes of people in other countries. That is one of the penalties of colonialism. It is but reasonable to expect that the visit of such a body of delegates, known and trusted in the communities to which they respectively belong, will do more to make the country and its resources known than almost any amount of advertising, or even of lecturing by our own agents, could do. The agricultural capacities of Canada are practically unlimited. Upon their use and development every other industry depends. It is, on every ground, to be hoped that a considerable and continuous addition to the agricultural population of different sections of the Dominion may result from the visit of this delegation—not necessarily at once, but in the years to come.

AMONG the darkest chapters in "In Darkest Africa," are those relating to the tragical fate of Major Barttelot and the unfortunate rear column left in his charge at the Yambuya Camp. Probably, as Mr. Stanley now intimates, many of the closer readers of his book may have felt that those chapters were dark in a double sense; that a veil of mystery was left hanging over those eleven months of strange inaction. That mystery is now, unhappily, likely to be dispelled in a very unpleasant manner. It has long been well known that the members of Major Barttelot's family and his intimate friends were not satisfied with the light in which he was placed by the Stanley narrative. They have felt that justice had not been done to his memory. Matters were brought to a crisis when the letters and diaries of the deceased were, many will think very unwisely, given to the public a few days since by his brother. The charges and insinuations therein made against the leader of the expedition were too grave to be passed over in silence. The inevitable *New York Herald* interviewer has appeared, and, if his report may be accepted as trustworthy, Stanley has retaliated on his accuser with a series of statements and insinuations which have the effect of throwing a yet darker shade over the memory of the slain officer. With real or apparent reluctance, and under a form of reserve, Stanley has really blasted the dead man's reputation almost more effectually than any detailed statement of offences could have done. The reports of Mr. Bonny and others in regard to the story of the rear column were, he now tells us, curtailed and changed in order to shield the memory of the brave but misguided officer, who paid the penalty of his misdeeds with his life. Some may be disposed to question whether a still larger magnanimity would not have persisted in a dignified silence, notwithstanding the exasperating attack made by Major Barttelot's brother in the publication above referred to. Be that as it may, the die is now cast. Both the friends of the deceased and the public will insist on probing the facts to the bottom, and in demanding satisfactory proofs of the statements that have been made on either side. The unknown is always magnified in the popular imagination, and even stern, uncompromising facts are often kinder than partial statements and broad insinuations. It may be that the stories of Mr. Bonny and other officers of the expedition will place the whole history above the mists of doubt and suspicion. But having gone so far, it seems scarcely probable that the incredulous and indignant friends of the deceased will wait for such evidence. It will be surprising if Mr. Stanley is not at once called on to retract or make good his significant utterances. It is a sad pity that so noble an exploit should have been marred by the jealousies and other weaknesses of any of its leaders, and that these must now be dragged to the light for public inspection. But the truth must now out, so far as it is possible to establish it.

"HOME RULE for Ireland; the question of temperance; a working day of eight hours; the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland; the disestablishment of the Church in Wales; woman's suffrage; Home Rule for Scotland, and allotments." Such is the rather stiff pro-