

she cannot afford to keep those expensive armies of observation inactive for an indefinite period. She must mean to precipitate the crisis, or the turn in the Eastern Question, when she is ready for the one or the other. Hence neither her own protestations nor Bismarck's assurances can have much effect in permanently allaying anxiety. Prussia herself is not rolling in wealth that she can afford to keep a standing army of a million of men on each frontier, year after year; nor is Austria. The inference seems almost irresistible that Russia anticipates the struggle in the near future, or means that it shall come when she is ready for it. When that time comes Bulgaria will afford a ready and convenient *casus belli*, if no other presents itself.

It is hardly an hyperbole to say that the eyes of the world are upon M. de Lesseps, in his magnificent struggle to carry through to completion his great project, the Panama Canal. The man's courage is simply marvellous; his strength and steadfastness almost sublime. He knows no failure. So far as appears his recent great defeat, in the refusal of the French Government to sanction his lottery scheme—a defeat which would have been fatal to any ordinary resolution—has but stimulated him to devise new plans and put forth fresh efforts. The French Premier, M. Tirard, was no doubt right in refusing to intervene, with the influence and prestige of the Government, in a scheme which, apart altogether from its uncertain and perhaps visionary and impossible character, is in no respect a national undertaking. In fact, seeing the immense hold M. de Lesseps and his great project have upon the French imagination, it must have required no little courage on the part of M. Tirard to meet the proposition with a direct negative. The irrepressible de Lesseps refuses to accept the refusal, and is already appealing from the French Ministry to the French nation. He has issued a circular urging all the Panama shareholders and bondholders to go or write to the nearest correspondent of the company, and to sign the petition to their representatives in the Chambers, a form of which petition will be at the correspondent's. He thus hopes to bring such pressure to bear upon the representatives as will enable him through them to force the Ministry to reconsider their decision. His appeal to the shareholders and bondholders is in its turn backed up by one still wider in its scope—to the pride of the French people. In the same breath in which he reminds those who have already invested so heavily in the undertaking that failure to carry it to a successful completion means total loss of the sums already advanced, he invites the whole people to come forward and avert the national disgrace of having the great work fall into the hands of foreigners. There is no reason to believe the hint a meaningless one. Failing help from his own countrymen M. de Lesseps is not the man to shrink from enlisting, if possible, British or American capital and ambition in his stupendous undertaking.

ONE of the most perplexing things in connection with the Panama Canal Scheme is the apparent impossibility of gaining any reliable knowledge of the present state and prospects of the undertaking. M. de Freycinet's Government commissioned M. Rousseau, its Chief Engineer of Roads and Bridges, to visit and report on the work. He did so, but the public seems to be little the wiser. M. de Lesseps quotes his report as favourable in tone, but while M. Rousseau holds a canal to be a possibility, his report asserts that the present work is impracticable unless substantially modified and simplified. Numerous other engineers have gone to look, but, as an English exchange puts it, they, "with equal knowledge, reputation, and apparent faculties of vision, see diametrically opposite sights. To one a deep and wide channel is apparent where a second beholds nothing but a shallow ditch already filling up and a row of dilapidated rusty engines." Estimates of the sum already expended vary from \$80,000,000 to \$200,000,000, and the canal is, it seems pretty certain, not nearly half completed. The *Boston Globe* says that "upwards of 12,000 labourers are employed and 20,000 more are wanted. The hospital establishment is itself a colony, employing thirty physicians and fifty apothecaries. The obsequious undertaker is dispensed with, and with little ceremony the seven per cent. of labourers, which covers the average death roll, are deposited in neighbouring trenches," and adds with charming indefiniteness that "a rough estimate of the final cost is \$600,000,000, though double the amount may be required." And yet he would scarcely be an over-bold prophet who should predict that the canal will be completed and in operation before the beginning of the twentieth century.

Not only America but the world has suffered loss in the death of Professor Asa Gray, the eminent American naturalist. It is probably not too much to say, that botanical studies have become invested for all time

with a nobler influence and a profounder significance through the results of his labours. As one of his eulogists has observed, "Botany is to be regarded as far more than the research of an awakened curiosity, seeking fresh stimulus from each new discovery; it is something besides a classified account of the structure, organs, growth, and reproduction of plants; it is an apprehension, more or less vivid and full, of a most important part of the vast scheme of creation." It will redound to the lasting honour of the departed specialist that he not only devoted himself to his favourite study with the minuteness of research and the enthusiastic devotion which have made him famous among men of science, but that through his genius for classification and simplification he has done more than perhaps any other man to make the science of Botany a recreation and a delight to the million.

THE Schoolmaster is becoming more and more a power in all lands, but the sources of his strength have hitherto been in the main intellectual and moral, rather than legal. The tendency is now strong in certain quarters, and notably so in England, to call in the aid of legislation as a supplemental, or perhaps we should rather say, complementary force. The College of Preceptors in England already exercises very important functions in connection with the grading, etc., of members of the profession. The newly-formed Teachers' Guild, which held its first general conference a few weeks since, seems to cherish a still higher ambition. Already the Guild has a membership of nearly 2,600, and these, recognizing fully the advantages possessed by other professions which have become close corporations, are earnestly endeavouring to have their own converted into one. The question of registration of teachers took up a good part of the first day's discussion, and it was unanimously agreed that registration of some sort was a desideratum. But legal registration means virtual exclusion of the unregistered from the ranks of the profession, and consequent inability to gain a livelihood by practising it. It is not easy to see any good reason why the profession of teaching should not be accorded the same status in this respect as the professions of law or medicine, and yet many and serious objections will readily suggest themselves against erecting the great body of teachers in any country into a close corporation. Practically the same question in a modified form has been raised in Ontario, in connection with the proposed establishment of a College of Preceptors. It is not improbable that the weight of opinion and argument, in this country at least, will be found in favour of lessening rather than increasing the sphere of close corporations.

#### ENGLISH POOR LAWS AND CANADIAN NEEDS.

CARDINAL MANNING has been reading the *Times* a timely lesson in regard to the present perplexing problem of the distress of labouring men in London through inability to procure work. The *Times* recently accused His Eminence of "countenancing the fallacy that under the poor law men have a natural right to work for bread." He had also been accused of advocating the giving of out-door relief, and censuring the present system of administering relief through the workhouse only. To both these counts he pleads guilty, and ably defends his position by a reference to the natural right of man to live, and by showing what has been, since the Elizabethan era, the tenor and spirit of British legislation as to the aid of the poor and needy. As to the first point he shows that, as there is a natural obligation on men to give bread to the hungry, so "the law of natural charity recognizes in each the same right to live, and imposes upon us all, according to our power, the obligation to sustain the life of others as we sustain our own." In regard to the second, he shows clearly, by quotations from old English statutes, that the provision of work for the unemployed was one of their main objects. One of the Elizabethan Acts which he quotes is particularly explicit on this point. This was "for the punishment of vagabonds and for the relief of the poor and impotent. It made it penal to give money to any rogue or vagabond, or sturdy beggar, but provided relief for those 'who are whole and mighty in body and able to labour.'" Another had for its "intent that youth may be accustomed and brought up in labour and work, and that they may not grow to be idle rogues: and to the intent also that such as be already grown up in idleness, and so are rogues at present, may not have any just excuse in saying that they cannot get any service or work, and be then without favour or toleration worthy to be executed, and that poor and needy persons may be set on work." Justices, too, in every city, town, and market-town, were enjoined to order "a competent stock of wool, hemp, flax, iron, or other stuff—by taxation of all—so that every poor and needy person, old and young, able to work and standing in need of relief, shall not for want of work, go abroad begging, or committing pilferings, or living in idleness."