

THERE were sixteen failures in Canada reported to Bradstreet's during the past week, as compared with seventeen in the preceding week, and with twenty-eight, eight, and eight respectively in the corresponding weeks of 1883, 1882, and 1881. In the United States there were 187 failures last week reported to Bradstreet's, as against 178, 137, and eighty-five during the corresponding weeks of 1883, 1882, and 1881. About eighty per cent. were those of small traders whose capital was less than \$5,000.

SAYS the *Chicago Current*: "Since the Dominion of Canada was organized under the British North American Act of 1867, the confederated provinces have contrived to run up a debt of about \$250,000,000, or to be accurate, \$254,159,104. It was increased by \$50,000,000 at the last session of the Dominion Parliament, which was chiefly occupied dealing out subsidies to allay provincial jealousies. This is very bad for a country with a population of less than 4,500,000. What the Dominion seems to need is more people; but they do not come very rapidly. They go away, however. There are 700,000 Canadians in the United States."

MR. W. HENRY BARNEBY is the author of a book just published on "Life and Labour in the Far West," and some of his opinions on Manitoba matters may be worth quoting as those of an "outsider." Needless to say, Mr. Barneby has visited the great North-West Territory, and thus writes of Winnipeg: "Winnipeg, however, has a future before it—in fact it is looked upon as the great city for the whole of the North-West, while it is believed that any investment in land which could be made at a fair price within ten or twenty miles of the town would be of much ultimate value. Meanwhile the streets, though wide, are not half made. The soil is a black loam of very considerable depth, there is some small scrub wood about, but this, of course, would all plough out if the land were cultivated. The winter lasts about six months, and usually commences with November, January and February being the hardest months. June is considered to be the rainy month. Thunderstorms are not frequent, and mosquitoes are not particularly troublesome." Speaking more at length in a subsequent chapter concerning Southern Manitoba, Mr. Barneby gives it as his opinion that, while a great deal of the soil is undoubtedly of first-class quality and far superior to anything he saw in the North-West territory, it is mostly a grazing country, and that stock-raising would be more profitable than wheat-growing, which, according to the present system of farming at least, must collapse in a few years. The land is not so deep nor so suitable for wheat as that in the Red River Valley, but for stock-raising it has in many parts great advantages, both from its undulating character and the number of its ponds and creeks. The present settlers have not enough capital to invest largely in stock, and should they ever come to possess it, our author thinks that their land is so cut up with ploughing that it will be impossible to keep the cattle off the crops without doing a great deal more fencing than would have been necessary had the farms been judiciously laid out at first. As regards these crops themselves, wheat, oats, barley, and potatoes grow most luxuriantly upon the land when first broken, and for from one to four years afterwards, according to the depth of soil. Potatoes, especially, do exceedingly well. Mr. Barneby hardly ever saw a bad crop in all Southern Manitoba.

NOT only is there a difficulty in finding masters for many old established pack of fox-hounds for the coming season in England, but there is an unfortunate spirit of opposition to the sport springing up in the breasts of the farmers. English agriculturists, as a rule, are not wise in their philosophy. Not so many years ago, those of them who had been cultivators of hops agitated for the repeal of the hop duty. As a result, the market has been glutted with those of foreign growth, and the burden of the duty would gladly be borne again by the growers at home. So it is likely to be with fox-hunting. It is only when it is put down that its opponents will begin to reckon what they have lost in doing away with so important a market as that caused by hunting. Some idea of the money spent may be gathered from the annual table, just published. Independent of stag-hounds and harriers, there are now in England over one hundred and fifty packs of fox-hounds. These packs will give some five hundred meets per week, and allowing that each costs as many times £600 as it hunts in a week, we get a total of £300,000 as an approximate amount needed to keep the various establishments going. Now, add the amount spent to those riding to hounds on the purchase, keep, shoeing and necessary saddlery. Say that there are but one hundred men to each hunt, and that they have but two horses a-piece, valued at the low figure of £50 each; that gives 15,000 men with 30,000 horses, and their value one and a-half millions of pounds. The keep of these horses amounts to a very large sum, which either directly or indirectly finds its way into the farmers' pockets. The employment of labour in connection with these hunts must also be

considered. There are huntsmen, kennel-huntsmen, whippers-in, stablemen, feeders, and a host of subordinates, all causing a vast sum to be circulated every year, much of which would, were it not for hunting, be spent abroad in a more pleasant clime than that usually associated with an English winter.

MR. SPURGEON, last week, reached his fiftieth birthday, and the occasion was made use of by his numerous friends and admirers to present to the reverend gentleman a substantial purse, as a slight recognition of his long and arduous services in the cause of Christianity. Probably no man of the day, no matter to what persuasion he may belong, has awakened so much enthusiasm in the cause of religion as the now shining light of the Baptist creed. This enthusiasm is by no means confined to his own congregation, or even to the metropolis, where his chief labours are directed, but radiates throughout the whole civilized world. The works published by the great Baptist divine are translated into every known language. Like many other illustrious divines, the present preacher of the London Tabernacle met, at the outset of his career, difficulties of no ordinary nature. Scorned, despised and scoffed at, even by men who, like himself, professed to be God's ministers, he has surmounted every obstacle, and the records raised by him in his career will mark an everlasting testimony to the work he has accomplished, in both the cause of religion and education.

FROM recent accounts given of the progress of the Panama Canal works, it would appear that M. de Lesseps is pushing on with characteristic vigour. Already twenty-three sections of the line have been opened, and workshops on the most complete scale have been run up at convenient intervals. The population is growing at a remarkable rate. There is, we are informed, "a perfect mania for building." The process of excavation is that which is, of course, of the greatest interest, and it is going on with great rapidity. Six powerful dredges are being constructed at Philadelphia. Blasting must first be resorted to when schist or gneiss is encountered. As one example of the metamorphosis caused by all this activity and outlay of money, the town of Colon is instanced. It was a miserable little hamlet in 1880, but is now a prosperous town, with brisk trade and swarming streets. The company has spent between six and seven millions sterling during the last three years and a half, but not even the major part in strictly canal operations. M. de Lesseps is very sanguine as to the results of his great exertions and enterprise, and if no hitch should occur, his confidence will, no doubt, prove well founded.

COMMENTING upon the ill-judged action of the Duke of Richmond, and others with protectionist proclivities, in the matter of discouraging the importation of cattle into England on the pretence of stamping out disease, the *Liverpool Mercury* says: "Two can play at the game of excluding cattle. America has retorted upon us by a severity of quarantine which is in some instances almost prohibitory; and the Herefordshire farmers are bitterly complaining of the blow dealt to them. That is not all, the tariff has nearly doubled in twelve months; and the result is to make the farmers of many of our agricultural counties very anxious about the future."

IN the course of a recent trial in one of the civil courts, the fact was revealed that Signor Foli is not Signor Foli, but Mr. A. J. Foley. The absurdity of Italianising homely names has often been exposed, but never more vigorously than by Mr. Santley's refusal in his early operative days to be christened Signor Santelli. Mr. Foley should adhere to his meek admission of name and nationality. His fine voice and artistic method will continue to sustain his reputation.

OUR able contemporary, the *Chicago Current* is mis-informed when it reports that Mr. Sims Reeves, the world-famed tenor, has "only the wreck of a voice to bring to America." As the result of the exceeding care Mr. Reeves has taken of his voice, he sings almost as well to-day as he has any time during the past fifteen years. It is in the recollection of many even "on this side" that, upon an occasion three years ago when the Reeves, *père et fil*, sang at the same ballad concert in St. James' Hall, London, the universal verdict was, not alone that Sims Reeves was, despite his age infinitely the better singer of the two, but that he was then just as capable of doing justice to a tenor song as he had been at any previous period of his career. It is well known in the profession that had Herbert Reeves fulfilled his father's expectations, he would have been kept persistently before the public as the recipient of his father's mantle; and the latter artist would have retired "full of honours." The son, however, despite all the prestige which his father's name gave him, was unable to