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EDITORIAL NOTES.

The truculent elephant "Chief," who, it is said, has killed no less than seven men, did not, after all, afford a test of the strength of electric currents, as it was said he was to do. A very extraordinary method of execution was substituted. By hard work a noose was got round his neck. Two of Forepaugh's most powerful elephants were fastened to the ends of the rope on either side, and made to pull together. In twenty seconds "Chief" dropped to the ground a perfectly garroted elephant.

A monster 111 ton gun, recently manufactured in Germany, is stated to carry its projectiles a distance of 20 miles. As a 200 ton gun, building in England, is only said to have a range of 15 miles, the longer distance may admit of a doubt. But the flight of shot for even less distances than those named, means tremendous impact and penetrating power at shorter, but still very long ranges. The powers of artillery attack, indeed, seem to be gaining so decidedly on the possibilities of protection by armor, that there is a growing probability of the ultimate abandonment, or at least modification, of the armor system.

We have more than once referred to the shameful imposition in the Upper Provinces of a rate of discount on the notes of Maritime Province Banks. The Halifax Banking Company has, it appears, effected an arrangement with Molson's Bank, Montreal, by which the notes, at all events, of these banks will be interchangeable without the charge levied by the other banking institutions. The discount is an indefensible exaction. The Maritime Provinces could not be worse treated in this respect if they were foreign countries instead of Provinces of the same Federation.

A remarkable feature connected with the singularly rapid rise of the tide of prosperity in the Argentine Republic, is the disturbance of the industrial world by the phenomenal growth of its demands, which have actually caused securities to fall on the European stock exchanges, and the Bank of England to raise its rate of interest. Argentine borrowings have risen to such huge proportions that they have exhausted the spare gold of Europe, and are now tapping the vast hoards of the United States, which, some American papers complain, are to be used to build up a new rival to their farming community in the markets of the world.

The Halifax Post Office has been greatly improved in many important respects within the past few years, it evidently being the aim of the postmaster to fully meet the wants of the public. There is still one improvement needed, and that is a better arrangement for the sale of stamps. The stamp window is in or near a corner, and, on English mail days, stamp buyers are packed like sardines in a box in their rush to get to the window. Having secured their stamps they then have to struggle out through the crowd, a most unpleasant performance, especially to ladies. The crowding and confusion might be avoided by the erection of a railing, so that only one person at a time could approach the window and pass out free of the crowd. The difficulty could, of course, be avoided by laying in a supply of stamps, or purchasing them at some of the numerous outside depots, but nine persons out of ten never think of this, and as this is likely to remain the case, something should be done to provide for their comfort.

The appointment, by the Local Government, of a very strong commission to enquire into the question of legal costs, has drawn considerable comment, for and against, from the *Chronicle* and the *Herald*. As there seems to have been some dissatisfaction with the alleged high schedule of costs now in force, we think the Government have made a wise concession to the public in granting the appointment of a commission. A searching investigation into the question by the experts now appointed, will certainly result in good, and, we think, will have a tendency to disabuse the public mind of its now erroneous opinion that Solicitors and Barristers are overpaid, as there never was a greater mistake. There may be some unnecessary costs in the way of printed cases and court fees, and reforms may be introduced in the method of taxing costs that may result in considerable saving to litigants, but we believe that it will find really very little requiring alteration. The main good accomplished by the commission will be in proving to the public that legal costs and fees are not so exorbitant, as it has been led to believe. The *Echo*, in announcing the names of the commission, speaks of Mr. Henry as President of the Barristers' Society, which is erroneous, as Mr. C. Sydney Harrington has the honor to hold that position, Mr. Henry being Vice-President.

Christmas has come and gone, let us hope with merriment and happiness to all. We have of late years seen several "green" Christmases, but that of 1888 has perhaps been more remarkable than any that have preceded it for many years for the extreme fineness and mildness of the weather. It can scarcely be doubted that some slow and gradual change in the nature of the seasons has actually taken place within the last 50 or 60 years. The average temperature of the year is not much affected, nor, happily, does it retard or diminish our harvests, but that the winter, at least in its early part, is milder than of old, at all events on the sea coast, can scarcely be doubted. Whether we suffer from a proportionate prolongation of cold into the spring may also be a question, but there can be none as to the relief to poor people of mild weather 'till after the New Year, which we sincerely hope may prove one of happiness and prosperity to all classes and individuals, so far as the dispensations of Providence may permit. For any alleviation of the sufferings and discomforts of extreme cold to those who are ill provided for it, all classes feel thankful, and we only hope the weather may continue as it is 'till the New Year; there is plenty of time, to those to whom it is an enjoyment, to enjoy cold after New Year's day, and then, however cold it may be, the long hours of darkness shorten day by day.

Nearly all the greatest scholars and teachers in England have united in protesting against the evils of the present system of education, and more especially those of the complicated system of examinations, and the "cramming" process they entail. There is no doubt that many of the questions propounded at examinations are frivolous, and useless for any purpose, unless it be as an exercise of memory. We remember one, as to the name of an obscure river in Tasmania, if we remember rightly, of which no one on earth would be likely to know anything except a denizen of the immediate neighborhood of it. We have read a series of questions on English grammar, most of which were such as might puzzle many an excellent English scholar, if it were only by natural annoyance at their frivolous "catch-question" nature, and which might yet be answered by dull students, into whom the useless stuff had been ground. It is so in every branch. Not sound knowledge, but a successful examination is the end and aim of the preparatory cramming, and even the little sound knowledge there may be in a course of cramming is not abiding. It would seem that competitive examinations, if they cannot be got rid of, must be modified. The German Universities, which turn out scholarly and thoughtful men, do without them, and they are unknown to Michigan University.