

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

GENERAL GORDON and Pasha Baker are pushing forward to the relief of the places besieged by the followers of El Mahdi, but no little anxiety is felt for their own safety since the march is difficult and they must fight their way through a cordon of troops. A few more days will bring us the news of failure or success in the attempt.

As an instance of the thorough incapacity of Eastern officials, and of complete demoralization as regards honest government, we notice that last week General Gordon was deputed to place the son of the former Sultan of Darfour in possession of Darfour. The kingdom was to be restored on conditions that slavery be abolished and that commerce be free and unrestricted. The young Sultan started out in regal state with General Gordon. But it was soon found out that he was an inveterate drunkard, and worse, it transpired that the wrong man had been sent, for the drunkard was not the son of the former Sultan. It is said that General Gordon feels like turning right about face, and, instead of placing young men on rickety thrones, driving some of the tricky and sublimely treacherous old officials from their present holdings.

THE strain of present complications is proving to be severe on the health of the English leaders in Egypt, Sir Evelyn Baring, British Minister, is ill with Bronchitis, and Mr. Clifford Lloyd, Under-Secretary is still confined to his bed.

M. DE LESSEPS is still in great demand and has been invited to undertake to complete the canal which is to make St. Petersburg a seaport and independent of Cronstadt. The great engineer believes that England will yet adhere to his former proposals of enlarging the present Suez Canal.

THE reports just published showing the number of persons killed in one year in India by snake bites are sufficiently striking, but they become more so when it is observed that this enormous annual loss of life, amounting to nearly 20,000 persons, continues in spite of the wholesale destruction of the venomous creatures. The rewards paid by the Government to snake destroyers show that there were killed during last year throughout India no fewer than 322,421, of which 262,384 were found in the Bombay presidency alone. Local authorities are warned to remove "from town or village sites or their vicinity aloe, cactus, or thorn hedges, ruined houses and walls, and the like, which harbour and afford cover to these reptiles."

THE cotton operatives in the old country have to face the winter with no small prospect of great suffering. Many of the mills are running on half-time and intend to continue this way until the market improves. When it is remembered that the operatives scarcely receive enough pay to eke out a living, this curtailment of work will fall with exceptional severity upon them at this season of the year, and cause much suffering in very many families.

MR. GLADSTONE often finds time to give a piece of practical advice outside the domain of politics. He has lately been telling the farmers at Hawarden, and indirectly the farmers of England, that in the year 1880 no less than 750,000,000 of eggs had to be imported from abroad in order to satisfy

"the insatiable capacity" of the British for this particular article of diet. And he urges the farmers to attempt to recover this profitable market for themselves. It is not at all a healthy sign when countries allow the trade to be wrested from their hands.

THE Duke of Westminster is evidently alive to the spirit of the age in Great Britain. In a speech just delivered by his grace, in response to the toast of "The House of Lords," he said that the members of that august institution had been told they ought to clear out of the way altogether. He did not believe the House of Lords would stand upon the hereditary alone in its constitution. The times were changing, and, though the hereditary element had worked well on the whole, he believed that the House could not have existed so long but for the very liberal additions which had been made to it. What they wanted was some reform in the House of Lords itself, enabling that House to take a larger share in the public business of the country, and bringing it more within the range and spirit of the age and of public opinion.

THE first month of the New Year will, unhappily, be noted for its dreadful record of shipping disasters. From all quarters come reports of wrecks and loss of lives almost unparalleled in their heart-rending details. Sad to say it is to be feared that too many of the vessels were over-laden or quite unseaworthy.

THE English and American residents of Nice are renewing their efforts to suppress gambling at Monte Carlo. The newspapers at Nice record four violent deaths, that have taken place at Monte Carlo within a week, which were the result of gambling. A clerk of a commercial house, after losing money, committed suicide by firing a bullet through his brain in the street outside the gambling den in which he suffered. Another loser hanged himself on a tree behind the Hotel Londres, and a third put a bullet through his brain in the Hotel Paris. Another man who was a winner of 7,000 was robbed of his winning and stabbed to death in the gardens of the Casino. It is to be hoped that the strongest efforts will be taken for at once closing one of the greatest centres of demoralization in Europe.

THE Socialists are giving great trouble in Vienna and are being treated in a very drastic manner. An ordinance proclaiming a kind of martial law has been issued and suspected persons may be imprisoned for a week without trial.

THE House of Commons at Ottawa had a narrow escape from fire last week. On Sunday morning when Speaker Kirkpatrick ascended from his dining-room after breakfast to the drawing room, he found the room full of smoke and discovered the hearth rug, a foot stool, and the hangings around the mantle piece to be in flames. He opened a large window and threw the burning articles out. His timely appearance on the scene probably saved the country a heavy bill for building.

THE deposits in the government savings banks are rapidly increasing and the depositors have the best possible assurance for their deposits. The total deposits in all Savings Banks under Government control in 1883 amounted to \$13,893,656, interest allowed \$912,992, and balance remaining on deposit at the end of the year was \$36,575,010. The cost to the Government for maintenance,

and interest to depositors, averages 4 1-5 per cent, of the balance remaining in its hands at the close of the year. It will be noticed that the average Canadian must be a money-saving biped, and yet when shall we hear the last of hard times.

FROM a recent report presented to Parliament we find that the total amount expended upon the construction and enlargement of the canals of Canada from their inception has been \$45,115,649, the chief items making up this sum being:—Lachine Canal, \$8,560,215; Welland, \$20,859,605; Cornwall, \$2,544,240; Beauharnois, \$1,624,632; Williamsburg, \$1,326,312; Carillon and Grenville, \$3,302,680; Chambly, \$651,745; St. Peter's, \$585,747.

THE report, too, concerning the Indians in the country is a very satisfactory one and shews that the Indians are gradually being weaned from their government "rations" and are assuming their place in the list of civilized subjects of the Dominion. The following statement concerning their maintenance and numbers is interesting. The appropriations last year were:—

Manitoba and Northwest	\$1,027,216
New Brunswick	4,627
Nova Scotia	4,071
British Columbia	43,731
Prince Edward Island	1,768

The number of pupils in Indian schools is as follows:—Ontario, 1,910; Quebec, 462; Nova Scotia, 79; New Brunswick, 71; Prince Edward Island, 11; Manitoba and Northwest, 1,180; British Columbia, 672—a total of 4,384. The total Indian population of the Dominion is 131,137, of whom 36,405 are in British Columbia, 34,520 in the North West, 18,121 in Ontario, 11,930 in Quebec, and 15,000 in the Athabaska and McKenzie districts.

FRANCHISE Bills seem to be the order of the day in most parliaments. One will be at once taken up in the British Parliament and a Franchise Bill has been introduced into the Canadian Parliament, which practically amounts to universal suffrage, or near enough to it. The provisions are:—In a city or town the person must (a) Own or occupy \$300 worth of property in the city or town; or be (b) A yearly tenant of real property, at a yearly rental of \$20 a year, or be (c) In receipt of a yearly income of \$400, or be (d) a son of an owner of real property where property is of a sufficient value to allow a \$300 qualification to all the sons as well as to the owner, and where the property is not of sufficient value, one son to be qualified for every \$300 after the first \$300, beginning with the eldest son, provided such sons reside with the owner of the property. In the counties the person must be (a) an owner or occupant of real estate worth \$200, or (b) A tenant at \$20 a year, or (c) In receipt of an income of \$400 a year. (d) The son of an owner of real estate—with the same limitations as in the case of the sons of city real estate owners.

FROM a Parliamentary report presented to Parliament last week we find that the customs revenue paid by the several Provinces in 1883, and the charges thereon are as follows:—

Ontario	\$7,664,527.15	\$231,794.04
Quebec	9,250,349.42	196,586.50
Nova Scotia	1,832,641.31	106,553.88
New Brunswick	1,514,897.41	87,787.17
Manitoba	1,764,805.72	42,530.90
British Columbia	908,962.54	20,497.14
Prince Edward Island	166,988.42	22,546.39
North West Territories	68,137.00	6,977.10
Total,	23,172,308.97	714,373.63