

Never before in the history of the *Salon de Paris* has the gold medal for especial excellence been awarded to a native of America, and it is gratifying to find the first possessor of this honor a Canadian. Mr. Paul Peel, a native of London, Ont., now a famous painter in Europe, is the fortunate man. He is not yet thirty-nine years of age and has reached the zenith of fame as an artist.

The celebration of the jubilee of the introduction of the penny post in Great Britain is suggestive of a still wider extension of the privileges of cheap postage. The Imperial Federationists are now endeavoring to have the advantages of the penny post extended to all parts of the British Empire, and, chimerical as the proposition may appear, there can be no doubt that in a few years the net results would be greater than they are at the present time.

Russia is projecting a great electric railway, the largest in the world thus far. It is to connect the Archangel on the White Sea with St. Petersburg on the Baltic, a distance in round numbers of five hundred miles. It is backed by Archangel interests and the name of Siemens Bros. is connected with it. The plan is to furnish the current from a series of generating stations along the line. The estimated cost including rolling stock is a little over \$15,000 per mile. The progress of the scheme will no doubt be watched with interest.

A new cathedral has been erected in Africa. It stands amidst the ruins of Carthage, on the very site of Kyrsa, the citadel where the Carthaginians made their last desperate stand. It is dedicated to Saint Louis the King of France, who died at Carthage while leading his army to Palestine in the Crusade, and whose body was interred there. The cathedral is the result, principally of the energy of Cardinal Lavignerie, and he has constructed for himself beneath the altar the tomb in which he desires his remains to repose with his inscription already placed thereon.

The recent explosion of dynamite in the north-end of Halifax should be a warning against carelessness in the handling of such a powerful explosive. The man who throws out dynamite in the wrong way is now almost as prominently before the community as the man who "didn't know it was loaded." They are both fools, but the dynamite fool has the recommendation that he is more likely to kill himself than anyone else, whereas the other usually kills some innocent victim. The law can deal with the criminals, but what is to be done with fools is a serious question.

The return of the Mowatt Government in Ontario by an increased majority proves most conclusively that Dominion and Local Politics have become dis-associated. Mowatt is admittedly a very able man, and has steered his party clear from the shoals and quicksands which have beset his opponents. McCarthy's ill-advised attempt to abolish French as an official language, and the bitter spirit of Orangism displayed by the Equal Righters and a few leading Conservatives, failed to win the support of Protestant Liberals, while it must have lost the Conservatives thousands of Catholic voters. The result is not to be regretted, and should forever set at rest religious cries in political contests.

In the *Atlantic Monthly* for June Charles Dudley Warner treats of "The Nova Scotia common school," and points out what everyone at all familiar with school boys and girls must have noticed, that they are lamentably ignorant of good literature. The object of the text books used in the schools seems to be to teach how to read and not what to read. A taste for good literature is quite as easily cultivated as a taste for what is trashy, and to make it of real benefit to pupils it should be begun at the beginning, and not put off until the ordinary school training has succeeded in cultivating inattention and intellectual vaneity. The best education is after all to be found in a thorough acquaintance with the best authors, and there is no reason why this taste should not be formed and the training begun in school.

Halifax is fast changing its sombre character and becoming a bright, active city, the fit metropolis of the fair Province of Nova Scotia. The change has been wrought so gradually that to the resident it is scarcely noticeable, but former citizens returning to visit their old home after a few years absence are loud in their exclamations of surprise and joy over the improvement that has taken place. In the business streets handsome plate glass fronts have replaced the former gloomy show windows, and paint artistically applied has brightened up everything. In the residential sections of the city many fine dwellings have been erected, showing that beautiful exteriors are now sought after as well as comfortable interiors. The horse cars and the electric lights have had no small share in brightening us up.

That there is room for improvement in the management of the Intercolonial Railway we believe is generally conceded. Mr. Pottinger, while nominally the manager, has still to refer all important matters to Ottawa, and this results in most harassing delays. Mr. Collingwood Schrieber, C. E., is the real manager of the whole system of Government railways, and while he is an engineer of proved ability and a man of the greatest energy and perseverance, there is no disguising the fact that as a business manager of railways he is a failure. The very exactness of his training as an engineer upfits him to successfully fill his dual positions of engineer and manager, positions which require in many instances abilities of almost conflicting characters. In all great systems of railroads the business department and the engineering department are entirely separate, and in the case of the Intercolonial it will be found that the best results will not be reached until the head manager is selected for his business training and push.

Contrary to the general idea that the Czar of Russia would treat with infinite contempt and scorn any advice or interference from foreign powers as to the treatment of Siberian prisoners; it seems that he has courteously replied to a letter from the Queen of Denmark, his mother-in-law, that he would cause a strict enquiry into the Siberian scandals, and punish heavily any excess of severity on the part of his officials, and promises to instruct his ministers to draft measures of amelioration. All this sounds quite meek and mild, and if the influence of a mother-in-law can work such a reform as is needed in the treatment of Siberian exiles, then all honor to it. Mothers-in-law have been a long suffering and much abused class the world over, but the action of Denmark's Queen should change this state of affairs.

A new phase of the French shore difficulties in Newfoundland is the refusal of the merchants to pay duties on imported goods and the consequent refusal by the customs' official at St. Georges Bay to allow goods, consigned there by the *Harlow* to be landed. In the meantime the delegates to England are being well received, and leading journals, such as the *Times* and *Standard*, have espoused their causes, and propose as a solution of the difficulty that the French Rights be purchased, the amount to be paid to be settled by arbitration. Reports of French aggressions have greatly incensed the populace of the island, and roused them to the point of almost actual rebellion, but official despatches received in England pronounce these reports as pure fabrications. That a solution of the difficulties satisfactory to Newfoundland will soon be arrived at is now quite evident.

In England and the United States one of the burning questions of the day seems to be shall women ride astride? A fashionable London tailor has made a riding suit especially for this style of riding, which it is said some society lady proposes to wear at a great meet of horses. It may be hard to overcome the prejudice against it, but why should not women have any comfort that is to be got out of a natural style of riding, instead of having to twist themselves into the position now fashionable on horse-back. The growing fancy for bicycle riding among the fair sex may assist in the movement, and before long we may see ladies riding, attired in suits which allow them the greatest freedom of motion and attitude without being at all immodest. It takes a brave woman, however, to break out of line, and set a fashion so at variance with custom. The increased safety afforded by the new style should recommend it to all equestrians. Not having a personal knowledge of the æsthetic effect of the dress, we cannot yet tell whether it will be an improvement on the present style or the reverse.

The recent exploit of some Harvard students in daubing the college building and the statue of its founder with red paint, is a disgrace which the faculty and the well behaved students would give a good deal to wipe out. College students are expected to have a considerable share of mischief in them, but what fun could be got out of such a deed it is difficult to understand. Another prank indulged in by a number of Harvard students during the past winter was productive of much amusement. A company called the Plymouth Rock Pants Co. during the winter distributed advertising cards asking the question "Do you wear pants?" which became quite a catch word among the students. One evening they attended the ballet in a body and sat in the front seats. When the ballet came on every student unbuttoned his coat and threw it back, disclosing the question on every breast "Do you wear pants?" The ballet was so shocked that it could not proceed with the programme, and the spectators had to go home. Most of them, however, considered that they had had their money's worth of fun. Such a trick is what is expected from college boys, but the vandalism committed recently is indefensible and should be punished severely. The perpetrators have not yet been discovered.

Every one must sympathize with the German Emperor in his endeavors to ameliorate the condition of the working classes in Germany. From the number of strikes during the past year the Emperor was led to inquire whether the existing laws took sufficient account of "such wants and wishes of the working classes as were just and compatible with social order." The result of the inquiry has been the passing of a bill by the Reichstag which covers pretty nearly the same ground as the English Factory Acts. Children are not to be employed under thirteen years of age, and until they are sixteen must not work more than ten hours a day. Women are not to work more than eleven hours a day, with a pause of at least one hour at mid day; and if they have household work the pause must commence half-an-hour before noon. They are not to return to work within four weeks after a confinement. To men and women alike Sunday is to be a holiday. In certain occupations, such as mines, quarries and foundries, work is absolutely prohibited for twenty four hours; and on the great holidays of Christmas, Easter and Witsuntide this prohibition is extended to forty-eight hours. In other handicrafts where Sunday labor is allowed it is limited to five hours; but the absolute prohibition may be extended by Imperial order with the consent of the Federal Council. There are also regulations for fencing dangerous machinery, for providing ample accommodation and, as far as possible, for separating the sexes. Notwithstanding that these regulations fall far short of the socialistic demand for limiting universally the hours of labor and fixing the rate of wages by law, they will greatly improve the condition of the German artisan. The extension of this legislation, however, depends upon a condition which lies beyond the control of the Imperial Government. It must be carried out "without detriment or injury to the national industry" — in other words Germany must not be placed at a disadvantage in the keen struggle of international competition. In order to obtain this result it would be necessary for all the competing nations to limit and protect their labor by similar regulations, and this was the object of the International Conference on labor recently convoked in Berlin.