

mental recreation. Gladstone was a devourer of novels, so was Sir John A. Macdonald, and so are some of the most learned and hardest brain-workers in this city. When a crisis arrived in the Franco-Prussian war, a messenger who called on Maltbe, by whose genius the war was directed, found the great general reading "Little Dorrit." It is known to us that the information and culture gained by an artisan in the Toronto Free Library enabled him to discover a mechanical process which led him to an industry being founded of great public value. Those who depreciate the educative and the moral influence value of a free public Library cannot have the requisite faculty for judging this question. To judge a Library's influence by the demand for its light literature is as sensible as judging the influence of a place of worship by its vain displays of millinery.

Notes and Items.

At Home and Abroad.

THE ONTARIO BANK has opened a branch at Waterford, Ont.

THE CANADIAN BANK OF COMMERCE has opened a branch at Innisfail and at Ponaka.

THE FIRE AT WINNIPEG, on 17th instant, is reported to have been covered by insurance on stock \$44,000, a total loss, and \$20,000 on building badly damaged.

INDEMNITY AGAINST RISK OF DOG BITES is proposed. There is such a hazard, no doubt, and a serious one at times. Any one desirous of a policy covering this risk should apply to an accident company direct.

THE BANK OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA has opened a sub-branch at Weston, Ont., under the management of Mr. John McEachren, of the Toronto Junction Branch.

PIRATES PUNISHED.—The captain and the owner of a schooner have been convicted at St. John's, Nfld., of casting the vessel away off the coast of Labrador for the sake of the insurance money, and were sentenced to four years' imprisonment.

STATE LEGISLATURES in America seem to spend most of their time discussing insurance laws, chiefly such as are designed to hamper the companies in doing business, and generally to discourage both fire and life insurance.

THE LUMBER CUT ON THE ST. JOHN RIVER is likely to be 134,000,000 this year, against 141 millions in 1902. The "Halifax Chronicle" thinks the Provinces have been "making too free with the forests," and censures the Provincial Government for "not having shown due regard for the preservation of the forests as a public duty."

HARTFORD FIRE PROMOTIONS.—On the first instant Mr. Charles E. Chase and Mr. Richard M. Bissell were elected Vice-presidents of the Hartford Fire Insurance Company. Mr. Chase is a son of President George L. Chase. He has had a thorough training both in the field and in the home office. For twelve years past, he has been Assistant Secretary of the Company. Mr. Bissell has for six years been a member of the firm of Cofran & Bissell, Western managers of the Hartford. He is a young man of first-class ability, and his promotion is very gratifying to his many friends.—"The Insurance Monitor."

THE MODERN WOODMEN Assessment Society proposes to assess its members so as to comply with the requirements for mortality under the American experience table for each \$1,000 of insurance. A contemporary announces this under the heading, "The Modern Woodmen's proposed method of making New and Younger members pay deficiencies of Long Time and Aged members." We hope the "new and younger" ones will enjoy the process.

FAILURES IN 1902.—Bradstreet's annual review has the following: "Though the number of business men increased by nearly 40,000 during the year, a gain of three per cent., no such proportionate increase in the number of failures was seen. In fact, of the 1,238,973 persons in business in the United States in 1902, only 9,973 failed, or, in other words, only eighty one-hundredths of one per cent. suspended operations owing more than they could pay. The proportion failing was, in fact, smaller than in the year 1901 by a fraction of one per cent., and, indeed, was the smallest percentage shown in the past twenty years."

COSTLY DELAY.—A verdict has been given in a Scotch Court against a Glasgow firm for damages claimed by the Government of Spain, for their delay in delivering four torpedo-boat destroyers on contract time.

Lord Kyllachy, the presiding judge, said he thought it more than probable that if Spain, even in the spring of 1897, had been in a position to establish a really effective blockade in Cuba against the unloading of munitions of war, the insurrection might have been crushed and American intervention have been avoided. He, therefore, allowed Spain \$2,500 a week for the 135 weeks' delay to which she was entitled under the contract. This will become a historic illustration of "great events" springing from "little causes."

PROMISSORY NOTE OBTAINED BY DURESS.—The Supreme Court of Canada affirms the judgment of the Ontario Court of Appeal in the action of Western Bank against McGill. The action was by the Bank against one of its local managers, as the maker of a promissory note. He defended claiming that he had been coerced by the head manager, under threats of dismissal and criminal prosecution into signing the note to cover up deficits in customers' accounts in which he had no personal interest. His evidence at the trial was denied by the head manager. The Supreme Court holds that the jury having believed the defendant's account, and given him a verdict, which the evidence justified, such verdict ought to stand. (Western Bank v. McGill, 23 Canadian Law Times, 36.)

MESSRS. FETHERSTONHAUGH & Co., patent solicitors, Canada Life building, furnish us with the following list of patents granted to Canadians in the following countries. Any further information may be readily obtained from them direct. CANADIAN PATENTS—J. Beaudin, bob-sleigh. H. A. Gurney, rotary pumps. A. W. Charlton, storage batteries. A. W. Robinson, dredge buckets. R. Pru-