

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

WE find from latest ministerial utterances in the British Parliament that the employment of General Gordan in the Soudan was suggested as far back as 1882, but difficulties were raised in Egypt. It was not until the beginning of this year that the difficulties could be removed, and then General Gordan was at once despatched to the Soudan. The Ministers hold a plan of the pacification of the Soudan prepared by General Gordan before he started on his mission, but this is not made public. Enough was hinted to show that he goes to the Soudan for the double purpose of evacuating the country by extricating the Egyptian garrisons, and reconstituting it by giving back to the petty Sultans their ancestral powers recently wrested from them. In fact his mission is one of restoration of old local privileges.

LATEST reports tell us that General Gordan asks for British and Indian troops to form the solid body of a Soudanese army, and that Admiral Hewett and General Graham expect to fight with Osman Digma this week. One thing is now certain, and that is that the British intend to leave a healthy opinion of their power on the minds of the natives before the work of reorganization and reform is entered upon.

A SLIGHT ruffle has taken place on the Continent over the recent utterances of the Continental press concerning England's action in Egypt. The German ministerial organs associate the alliance of Russia, Germany and Austria with a coming league of the continental powers against the maritime and commercial preponderance of England. A notable article appears in the *Kreutz Zeitung*, which predicts the formation of a league, including France, to break the insular supremacy of England, which it says, by the annexation of Egypt, has completed the links of a gigantic chain extending from Gibraltar to China, and, coiled around the body of Europe, monopolizes the commerce of the world, making the Mediterranean sea and Indian ocean English lakes. The *Berlin Post* urges France to join an alliance promising more substantial benefits than those arising from her dallying with England.

WE have not yet heard the last of Arabi. His name is quite a power in Constantinople, and it is also reported that there are secret Arab committees at Cairo, Beyrout, as well as at the Turkish capital, all which have constant connection with Ceylon. Three Egyptian officers who had been dismissed were recently arrested on account of their intrigues and were transported to the interior. The Arabi faction consists, it is said, of two sections, of which one desires that the Turks should direct the movement, while the other, favoured by the Egyptian majority, is opposed to Turkish influence. It is owing to these intrigues, correspondents says, that the *Porte* showed no anxiety to send a naval expedition to the Red Sea or a contingent of troops to the Soudan.

ENGLAND, it is reported, will ask Russia why she has taken possession of Merv, in violation of her promise not to do so. The explanation, says the *Boston Traveller*, will probably be that the promise was made to Beaconsfield, but that, England having repudiated the statesman who had a vigorous foreign policy, it was not intended for an era of weak and vacillating policy at the court of St. James.

It is often facetiously said that England rules the world with her yard stick, but perhaps it would be more to the point to say that she rules the world with her purse. A London journal estimates the amount of English capital invested in the colonies at £620,000,000 sterling. Of this amount, £255,000,000 is placed in India, £260,000,000 in Australia, and \$112,000,000 in Canada. The last sum is divided as follows:—Government securities, £30,000,000; railways, provincial and municipal bonds, £55,000,000; banks and loans on Mortgage, £7,000,000; other investments, £20,000,000.

SOME workmen recently engaged in constructing works on the banks of the river Dnieper, in Central Russia, employed the electric light to enable them to prosecute their labors at night. The brilliant rays of light attracted so many millions of nocturnal moths, beetles and other insects, that from time to time it was necessary to stop work and set all hands to destroying the clouds of winged victims that frequently completely obscured the light. This suggested the idea of employing the electric light to destroy nocturnal insects prejudicial to agriculture, and experiments in that direction are to be tried next spring. Not only to insects, but to fish, the light proves fatally attractive. Its rays, directed to the surface of the water, drew together vast quantities of all the fishes found in the Dnieper, and when within the charmed field of illumination they lay crowded together in masses, seemingly blinded and stupefied. The workmen, improving the opportunity, made a notable haul of fish.

It is once more reported that the Czar has decided to convene the Superior Council to consider the Socialist question and inquire whether there really exists a powerful Nihilist party, and if so what its wants are and how they may be satisfied or be crushed as the demands of the country may require. The council will be composed of representatives of the ruling classes and all the heads of the administrative departments.

DR. SCHLIEMANN gives, in a letter to the *Academy*, the results of his excavations in the mound upon the plain of Marathon, hitherto considered the tombs of the Athenians who were killed in the battle. The famous excavator found nothing in the tumulus except fragments of prehistoric pottery, probably belonging to the ninth century, B. C., and rude arrow heads of obsidian glass. There were no traces of human skeletons or funeral trappings.

REPRESENTATIVE WILLIS, of the United States Congress, has prepared a table to accompany his bill for Federal aid to education, which shows that illiteracy holds the balance of power in fourteen Northern and all the Southern States. In thirty-eight States there are 1,871,217 illiterate voters. Only one voter in five can write his name in the Southern States. The illiterate voters in South Carolina are more than one-half; in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia, one in two, while Missouri, with one in nine, presents the best record. In the Presidential election in 1876 New York, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Connecticut, Indiana, California, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Wisconsin, Illinois, Rhode Island, Michigan and Pennsylvania were ranged on the side of illiteracy. In the last Presidential contest thirty States of the Union, with 298 electoral votes, were again within the domina-

tion of sovereigns who could not read the very charter of their liberties. There is plenty of room for improvement in this respect.

THERE has been a motion placed on file in the House of Common, by Mr. Wilson, Q. C., in reference to the exclusion of bishops from the House of Lords. It is an exact transcript of motion laid before the Long Parliament, March 20, 1641, and runs as follows: "That the legislative powers of bishops in the House of Peers in Parliament is prejudicial to their spiritual function, injurious to the Commonwealth and fit to be taken away by bill."

A VERY timely bill has been introduced by the Hon. Mr. Costigan to prevent the adulteration of food and drugs, which declares that after the passing of the act it shall not be lawful for any person to manufacture, expose or offer for sale or sell any article of food or drugs adulterated within the meaning of the act. In the case of drugs they are held to be adulterated if their strength or purity falls below the standard laid down in the British or American Pharmacopoeia, or the professed standard under which they are offered for sale. Food is declared to be adulterated if any substance has been mixed with it so as to reduce or injuriously affect its quality or strength.

THE traffic receipts of the Canadian Pacific Railway for 1883 were \$5,281,811, an increase of \$2,648,391 over 1882. The traffic receipts per mile of road open in 1883 were \$2,598.

THE by-law to separate groceries from the liquor trade in Toronto, was last week approved off by a majority of 359 in a total vote of 5,069 for, and 5,210 against, larger than was ever before cast in the city. The temperance people are jubilant. The people of Toronto have acted wisely in the matter, especially as it is well known that the grocery liquor stores have been the greatest temptation to women.

THE new Bishop of Sydney has been receiving no end of good wishes and good things from his friends across the Atlantic, and the *Guardian* tells us that the gathering in Henry VII.'s Chapel to bid "God-speed" to the Bishop of Sydney was a remarkable one, and must have touched the hearts of many who agree with the Archbishop of York, that in sending Dr. Barry "we were sending Sydney of our best. We wanted such men in England, and we wanted them on the Episcopal Bench. It was with a strong feeling of regret that we parted with him, for we could ill spare him at home." The Dean of Westminster's letter respecting the loss of Bishop Barry's library in the *Simla* met with such ready and hearty response that Dr. Bradley is enabled to state that all danger of pecuniary loss to the Bishop has entirely disappeared. The Dean tells us "that before any mention of Bishop Barry's loss had appeared in print he had received an expression of sympathy from the Queen."

ACCORDING to a communication from G. Karsten in *Science* the remarkable sunsets which have caused so much speculation for several months past were paralleled in 1783 by similar phenomena. In that year occurred one of the greatest eruptions of Shaptar Jokul in Iceland, and for four months afterwards there were red sunsets precisely such as those which have been so noticeable since the explosion of Krakatoa. This is certainly a strong confirmation of the view that a layer of fine volcanic dust in the upper atmosphere is the cause of these striking appearances.