

It appears to pay from a worldly point of view to be a heretic. The Rev. Howard MacQueary, who was recently denounced as a heretic by the Episcopalians, has been offered a Unitarian pulpit at a salary of \$5,000.

Sir Provo Wallis, G. C. B., will complete his 100th year on Sunday next. A piece of plate, to be suitably engraved, has been made in London for presentation to the veteran Admiral on behalf of some of his Halifax friends.

It is said that the Government of the United States will introduce the reindeer of the domesticated Siberian variety into Alaska before the close of the present year. The natives living along the Arctic coast of Alaska are said to be in a state of starvation owing to the gradual diminution of the means of subsistence there, and it is thought that by the propagation of the reindeer a constant supply of food may be obtained for the Alaskans. The reindeer is valuable for many purposes. The large Siberian variety is ridden by the Tungusians, who also use it for draught, and who value it for its speed, endurance, and particular adaptation to travelling on snow. Reindeer meat is delicious, and the milk of the herds is preferred to cow's milk. Clothing that is almost impervious to the cold is made of the skin; and, in fact, there is hardly any part of the animal that is not available to some useful purpose.

Dancing is a never failing subject of controversy among the members of certain denominations, and the question, May Christians dance? appears as far from settlement as ever. *The Methodist*, St. John, says: "Our answer is a clear, strong, unqualified No! Under no circumstances ought they to do so," while in the *Canadian Presbyterian*, Toronto, "A Christian who dances" cites scripture again and again to prove that it is an innocent and proper amusement. It appears to us ridiculous for anyone to be dictated to in a matter of this sort. If a person cannot reconcile his or her conscience to dancing, or finds it does mental or moral harm, it is well in such a case to resolutely abstain from it, but if, on the contrary, it is found a healthful, enjoyable exercise, the scruples of others need make no difference to one whose conscience is clear and whose mind is pure. Doctors differ, and so do Christians, and the "Christian who dances" has just as good arguments for dancing as anyone could have for not doing so. At any rate it is not reasonable to suppose that the numbers of people who "trip the light fantastic toe" (by the way, did Milton disapprove of it?) will be greatly reduced by the indignation of those who abstain.

The final dethronement of Mr. Parnell is now evidently only a matter of time. Following the defeat of his candidate in Kilkenny, the election at North Sligo on April 2nd resulted in the return of Collery, McCarthyite, by a majority of 780 votes. Besides these decisive verdicts, the people of Northwest Cork have spoken against Parnell. On the same day as the North Sligo election there was an election for poor law guardians in Northwest Cork, in which the McCarthyite candidates were elected two to one. This in a constituency heretofore regarded as a Parnellite stronghold. Mr. Parnell does not dare resign his seat and try conclusions with Mr. Healy in face of these defeats. It is evident that it is no love of Ireland which actuates this leader whose following has grown small by degrees during the past four months; but rather a selfish desire to brazen out the matter, and keep himself at all costs in a position to which he has forfeited all moral right, not only by the part he played in the O'Shea matter, but by resorting to lies and tricks in purely political concerns. If Parnell had valued the interests of Ireland he would have resigned long ago, leaving his party to the guidance of their chosen leader, instead of creating a split which has given the Conservatives the opening they desire, and will be sure to make use of. It is even whispered that there is an arrangement between Parnell and the Conservatives that he shall put a candidate in the field in every contest in order to divide the vote, but it is almost too much to believe.

Some little time ago we were trying to discover who Osman Digna, the Dervish leader is, but were unsuccessful until a few days ago, when we came across the following account in an exchange. Whether it is reliable or not we cannot say:—"According to Dr. Schweinfurth, the famous African explorer, and others, the life of Osman Digna, the Dervish leader who is now fighting the Egyptians in the Soudan, is one of romantic interest. It is said he is in reality French born, his father being a certain Joseph Nisbet, who failed in business and then betook himself with wife and child—the latter being the alleged Osman Digna—to Egypt, where he soon after died. The widow married within a few months a Mahomedan merchant, who, having no children of his own, took a fancy to young George, his stepson, and entered him at the Cairo military school as Osman Digna, Jr. In 1860 the family moved to the Suakim, where Osman Digna the elder rapidly accumulated a fortune in slave trading. At his death the adopted son succeeded to the estate, adding rapidly to the wealth of the family. It was not long, however, before the slave trade being abolished, his wealth decreased. Actuated by revenge, Osman collected a force and attacked Sinkat in August, 1883, suffering defeat. This lost him prestige and his following fell away to 75 men. Two months afterward, however, he gained quite a victory over the Egyptian troops, and regaining favor by more successes, he made himself in a short time practically master of eastern Soudan. He is described as a man of herculean stature, with eyes of piercing blackness, shaggy eyebrows and an immense beard. He has lost his left arm in battle and contents himself with as few as three wives, who, however, are daughters of the chiefs of the most important and powerful Arab tribes of the Soudan."

We learn from the Kingston *News* that Major Drennan has undertaken to give one of a set of four silver challenge cups to be competed for by messenger pigeons trained to connect Kingston with Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec. This is a good example and will probably incite others to support the objects aimed at by the Dominion Messenger Pigeon Association. Lord Stanley is patron of the association, and all the Lieut-Governors of the Provinces, as well as the Ministers of the Federal Government are, we believe, vice-patrons. As regard Kingston, it is proposed that one cup shall be for competition for flights in either direction between each of the four named cities and Kingston, and that the cups be assigned at the close of each season to the care of the respective mayors of the winning cities, until won three years in succession by an individual loft owner, when absolute property in the cup so won shall pass to him.

A sad case of double suicide occurred at Newport, near Windsor, during the last week of March. Mrs. Madeline Duval, the pretty young wife of Lucian Duval, drowned herself in the river, and after the body was found a search was instituted for her husband. He was discovered wandering in the woods in a half demented condition, and it was suspected that he was responsible for his wife's death. A watch was set upon him, but during the funeral ceremonies he escaped and hung himself. A letter was found in his pocket stating that ever since his marriage he had been endeavoring to ascertain who his wife's parents were, she being an adopted child; and about a week before had made the awful discovery that his wife was his own sister. It appeared that the mother and father had separated, the latter going to Prince Edward Island, taking the son with him. After the separation the daughter, Madeline, was born. The mother, too proud to ask help of the father, never told him of the birth. The girl was adopted and brought to Newport, where Duval married her. Being religious they were overcome with horror at the discovery. Mrs. Duval evidently became insane and committed suicide, and remorse drove Duval to the same end. They were buried together on Easter Sunday. No sadder case than this has ever occurred, so far as we are aware, in our Province. It is an unusual and terrible tragedy.

Major-General Cameron, Commandant of the Royal Military College, Kingston, contributes a very interesting paper on messenger pigeons to the annual report of the Marine Department. In view of the fact that a pigeon loft is established at the marine wharf in this city, and that many people without proper study of the subject have laughed at the idea of pigeons proving useful as messengers, we have given the matter some thought and have concluded that for our part we shall be glad to see the experiments with the birds continued. Mr. Andrew Downs, the well-known naturalist, has had charge of the birds since August last, and his report (included in appendix No. 21 of the report of the Marine Department) speaks most favorably of them. The chief object of training pigeons in this city is to establish a means of communication with Sable Island. There are now a number of young birds ready for trial. Mr. Downs will take them some distance from the city and liberate them, increasing the distance gradually until they are reliable homers and fit for practical purposes. Before this appears the birds may possibly have received their first trial. Major General Cameron is an enthusiast on his subject, and his paper is full of records of what messenger pigeons have done in the past, as well as much valuable information regarding the varieties of birds. The *Carrier* is not, as many people imagine, the bird used for practical purposes. It may claim to be a distinct species, but the variety of pigeon used in messenger service is undistinguishable by untrained sight from the ordinary house pigeon. Of course the homing faculty, with great powers of wing and endurance are highly developed in such birds, which are known in German as *brieftauben*, letter pigeons; in French as *voyageurs*, travellers, and in English as travellers, couriers, homing and messenger pigeons. The speed of reliable messenger pigeons is frequently a mile in sixty seconds, and a flight of over six hundred miles has been known to have been made in one day. This speaks volumes for the ability of pigeons to be of use and is enough to awaken enthusiasm in any one. Birds find their way over the sea for distances little short of those which it can accomplish over land in a continuous flight. There is reliable evidence of their conveying news from 320 miles outside of Sandy Hook. Dr. Johnson, one of the leading authorities on the subject in the United States, is of the opinion that 450 miles may be regarded as the limit of reliance on the birds' power from seaward. One gramme, equal to 15,432 grains or .032 oz. avoirdupois is the weight which the French—during the siege of Paris by the Germans—considered might be carried by pigeons without effecting their flight. The message is written on thin paper and inserted in a turkey quill which is tied to the pigeon's tail. By the aid of photography messages of great length, reduced in size may be sent. It will thus be seen that despite steamboats, railways, telegraphs and telephones there are cases where pigeons can be of use, and we believe that Sable Island is a case in point. It lies 96 miles off Nova Scotia, and as everyone knows, is of great danger to mariners. By the use of pigeons news of a wreck on the Island could be received in Halifax within a few hours, and if relief were required it could be at once dispatched, thus providing with little cost a means of communication almost as good as a cable. The birds remember their homes for at least six months and may be relied upon to fly to them. In concluding this article Major-General Cameron says: "Who can estimate the mitigation of anxiety that pigeons might have afforded to the passengers of the *City of Paris* in her recent accident? at what slight cost this relief might have been supplied. Why should not all transatlantic steamers carry birds with them to announce the approach to either coast?"