

The *Times* observes that a piece of intelligence published last week would two centuries ago have excited a greater sensation than the outbreak of a most formidable war or even than the news of a crushing defeat. The plague, it seems clear, is once more threatening the confines of Europe. The progress of the pestilence last year in the valley of the Lower Euphrates aroused some alarm, and the contagion some weeks ago began to spread in Mesopotamia, and since the beginning of March it has reached Bagdad. The new outbreak shows much of the old and mysterious fierceness before which medical science for many centuries recoiled in despair. There is no reason to expect that its ravages will be limited to the provinces of Turkey in Asia. Both in Egypt and in European Turkey the conditions in which the plague breeds and spreads are still prevailing, with little mitigation since the time when Cairo and Constantinople were almost annually decimated by its attacks. Happily, there is not the least ground for believing that the essential conditions for its reproduction in Western Europe any longer exist.

It is said that the "walkist," WESTON, is addicted, when tired, to chewing the leaves of the coca plant, or *Erythroylon Coca*, the use of which enables the South American Indians to journey for days together without food. Sir ROBERT CHRISTSON, in a paper which he read last year before the Edinburgh Royal Botanical Society, related how he made the ascent of Ben Nevis, and how, arriving at the summit greatly fatigued, he chewed a portion of coca leaves, and found himself able to make the descent with firmness and juvenile elasticity. He also stated that, with the assistance of the coca leaf, he could walk sixteen miles with ease, while without it he felt on other occasions—much fatigued. This is the more remarkable as Sir ROBERT is well advanced in years, and, if it be indeed true that WESTON during his long walks habitually chews a piece of coca leaf, the plant is clearly one to which scientific men cannot too soon turn their attention.

After publishing our remarks on the imposition of the half-cent postage on newspapers delivered at the Post-Office in this city, the *True Witness* adds:

"The Post-Master General's attention was called to the above anomaly over a month ago, and he promised to inquire into the matter and do justice to the Montreal publishers. Publishers in Quebec, Kingston, Ottawa, and other places in the Dominion are not, we believe, required to prepay papers for box delivery and we don't see the justice of exacting it from publishers here. We hope the Honourable Postmaster General will redeem his word, pledged to those who waited on him in reference to this matter early last month."

We welcome the new *Evening Telegram*, of Toronto, to the ranks of independent journalism, of which there are comparatively so few specimens in Canada, and which is nevertheless destined to exercise a potential influence for good on the course of our public affairs. In the hands of so able a journalist as Mr. J. ROSS ROBERTSON, assisted as he evidently is by a talented staff of writers, we predict a successful career for the new paper, and we offer the publishers our best wishes to that end.

#### PRUME AND LAVALLÉE.

Although the evening of the 18th inst. ushered in a variety of amusements, dramatic and musical, nevertheless Association Hall was well filled with a most fashionable audience, and, what is of more importance, with our best connoisseurs. Mr. Lavallée played Mendelssohn's Concerto, op. 25, with exquisite skill; he reproduced in unequalled style Mendelssohn's grand ideas; under his fingers the concerto was, what it really is, a noble, beautiful poem. His rendering of Chopin's music was perfect; in the Nocturne his phrasing was perfection; in the decrescendo from *forte* to *pianissimo* was performed in a masterly manner, while the wild, impetuous Polonaise, op. 40, No. 1, proved that he has mastered thoroughly Chopin's contradictory character and music. In an Etude of his own composition, Mr. Lavallée

showed a technique such as only few of our living great masters possess. As a whole I can safely say of Mr. Lavallée that he possesses consummate technique, that his rendition of Mendelssohn and Chopin was accurate and precise to the very last point, that his conception of these composers is original and perfect, and lastly, that he combines a degree of enthusiasm and tenderness, fire and delicacy, which place him in the front rank of pianists, not only on this continent, but also in Europe. Mr. Jehin-Prume performed the first movement of Beethoven's Concerto, op. 61, in an original manner; his selection of Leonard's Cadenza proved his good taste, as it is, of all others written for this concerto, the most in harmony with Beethoven's composition. I have never listened to this masterwork with more satisfaction and pleasure; it was as near perfection as possible, being rendered in the true, artistic Beethoven-style. Placing Ernst's Elegie and Brahms's Hungarian Dances in contrast immediately after Chopin's music proved the true artist, for it is hardly possible to match three other compositions so entirely antagonistic in style—and pardon the paradox—so completely pervaded by the same spirit. In the Elegie the violin seemed a thing of life and feeling, as if it sang its heart's sorrow, while the Hungarian Dances carried me back in spirit among the prairie-lands of Hungary. I was again listening in rapture to the passionate and proud, the wild and capricious melodies of the Magyars. Mr. Prume's style of bowing is ease and elegance combined; his notes are clear, distinct and pure to a degree, in his playing he carries the audience completely with him, and his conception of the pieces played is bold, elegant and original, but above all it is true to the spirit of the composition. I learn with sorrow, surprise and shame, that Montreal will lose Mr. Prume this summer; with sorrow, because, as a lover of good music, I shall hereafter seek in vain for a thorough reproduction of my favorite masters; with surprise, that in a city of nearly 150,000 inhabitants, so few will devote the necessary time to the study of that glorious instrument, the violin; with shame, that the Montreal public, altho' boasting of its musical connoisseurship, is either so self-sufficient in its assumed knowledge, or so entirely ignorant, that it cannot appreciate a great artist, and will not learn his worth and value until after his departure. Is there not enough of public spirit and genuine love of music in this large city to secure the permanent residence of an artist like Mr. Prume? Let the public avoid the stigma of having lost him for want of scholars!

Beethoven's Trio, op. 1, No. 3, was well performed, Mr. Wills showing great control over the Cello; his playing evinced an appreciation of the subject, and he proved himself, altho' an amateur, worthy of his associates. We have long felt the want of a good Cello-player and Mr. Wills promises to fill the void most creditably. The Quatuor, Beethoven, op. 18, No. 3, was not up to the standard; it was played throughout like a violin solo with trio accompaniment; this failure, the only one of the evening, was no doubt due to a feeling of diffidence on the part of the performers while playing professionally on equal terms with a virtuoso. In regard to chamber-music, I hope that in the course of the other concerto the public will be favored by some of Schubert's piano trios or, if possible, his duo brillante. Mrs. Prume acquitted herself very creditably in her vocal selections, particularly in the duo from *L'Élixir d'Amour*, a style of music far more suited to her voice than Handel's Aria. She has a very sweet and well cultivated voice, thoroughly *au fait* in the lighter style of vocal music. Mr. Couture contributed materially to the enjoyment of the evening. Mrs. Bellevue kindly took charge of the piano-accompaniments, generally a thankless task, but, I am happy to say, she earned through her excellent play the thanks of the audience. The orchestra accompaniments were very good and would deserve the highest credit, had the time in Beethoven's violin concerto been more strictly kept, a fact for which the gentlemen can in no wise be blamed, as it is nearly an impossibility to accompany in perfect time any solo-instrument without a conductor. VOX.

#### THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

Never, since the opening of this favorite place of amusement, has there been seen such a week of crowded houses, as the past one, every night being a regular crush, seats having to be purchased two or three days in advance, and we are glad to see that Mr. McDowell's endeavors to cater for the public, and spare no expense, in providing the best of talent, scenery and appointments, have met with such a hearty response. The programme for the week was "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which has been produced before in this city, but in most cases in such an indifferent manner as to bear no comparison with the way in which it has been placed before us by the present company. With the novel most of our readers are well acquainted, and as the author of the play has adhered pretty closely to the text of the work, description will be unnecessary. Although none of the characters are of a very heavy nature, still they all require perfect acting to make the piece, which would otherwise drag, a perfect success, as it has proved on this occasion. Several of the characters were specially engaged for the parts they represented, conspicuous among them being Mr. Geo. Kunkel, as "Uncle Tom," Miss Connie Thompson as "Topsy," &c., &c., while, to insure a still

greater success, the Georgia Jubilee Singers had been secured at an enormous outlay, and their beautiful rendering of the different songs and plantation melodies proved one of the greatest attractions. In fact, the honors may be safely divided between them and Miss Selina Rough as "Eva," who, although only 11 years of age, played the character with such intelligence and ability, as to be surprising in a child of her tender years, and which, coupled with her innocent beauty, and affecting rendering of the song "Oh, papa, set him free," fairly captivated the audience, whose applause brought her before the curtain on several occasions. During the garden scene, (Act III.) each evening, between St. Clair, Uncle Tom and Eva, there was scarcely a dry eye in the house, not excepting the sterner sex, and we are sure many of our fair friends enjoyed it all the more, for being able to have a good cry, which many of them did. Mr. Kunkel, as "Uncle Tom," was very effective, and was warmly applauded in his singing of "Flee as a Bird," and "Those little ones at Home." Miss Thompson, as "Topsy," was also very successful, although we think it would have been better if her song and dance in the 4th Act were omitted. It savors too much of the Variety entertainment, does not accord with the other features of the play, and was not generally approved of by the better part of the audience. Mr. Warner, (Simon Legree) looked and acted the brutal ruffian to perfection, and was particularly effective in his scene with "Cassy," where he expresses the remorse at his past life. Mr. Morris, as "Marks," as usual caused roars of laughter whenever he appeared, but, in our opinion, he overdid the character. We mention this in kindness to Mr. Morris, for we have noticed it on several occasions, and we think it a pity that such a brilliant career, as his promises to be, should be perhaps ruined by pandering to the desire to cause merriment or raise a laugh, at the expense of true, legitimate acting. All the other characters were well represented, Mr. Powell as "Gumption Cate," giving a good version of the Yankee we sometimes read about as having existed in days gone by. Miss Cameron as "Cassy," although having little to do, made the most of her part, and the same may be said of Mr. Chippendale as "Phineas Fletcher," and Mrs. C. Hamilton as "Ophelia." In consequence of the great success of the piece, it is to be repeated five nights more, several of the company, who, we believe, are engaged in England, having postponed their departure for that purpose, and we hope to see as large audiences for the remaining nights as the last week has witnessed, thus bringing to a brilliant conclusion one of Mr. McDowell's most successful attempts.

#### FORT CHAMBLÉ.

Fort Chamblé or Pontchartrain, the only relic of the kind in North America, derives its name from the original builder of a Fort on this site, Capt. Jacques de Chamblé, and from Pontchartrain, the name of the French Minister of Marine and the Colonies when it was completed in 1711. It is a quadrilateral Fortress, flanked by four bastions at the basin of Chamblé, on the left bank of the river Richelieu, about 15 miles eastward of Montreal, built chiefly of rubble masonry, but of beautifully dressed stone at the quoins and angles, in 1709-10-11, according to plans by the Chief Engineer, Chaussegros de Léry, acting under the immediate orders of the Commandant of Montreal, M. de Longueuil. The present building stands on the site of a wooden Fort, (known in history also as Fort St. Louis, one of a number erected along the banks of the Richelieu in 1665, by the famous regiment of Carignan, arrived this year from France with the Viceroy de Tracy, both for protection and offensive operations against their implacable and crafty foes, the savage Iroquois. The exterior dimensions from one salient point of the bastion to another are 178 ft. by nearly 35 ft. high, and that of the curtains between the flanks 106 ft. by nearly 30 ft. in height. The walls, about 4 ft. thick, were loopholed for musketry, and otherwise defended by field Artillery and a few mortars for projectiles. Except in time of war, or threatened danger, the French garrisons were kept on a very small footing. Before the American war of 1812, the English garrison was composed of about two companies of Infantry and a small detachment of Artillery. The Old Fort, about this time, was put in a thorough state of repair, and owing to the proximity of the enemy's frontier and its advantageous position as a *point d'appui*, was occupied by a force of between 400 and 500 men, and surrounded on the "Common" (or want of other barracks at the station) by an encampment of nearly 6000 men under canvas. There appears to have been ample accommodation, in the old edifice, for the storage of provisions, ammunitions of war, &c., and even for prison cells, which formerly stood beside a small chapel for Divine Service, on the ground floor built against the curtain next the river; this chapel, or place of Worship, was called the Church of St. Louis, in compliment to the French King Louis XIV. It was again occupied as an important military post during the troubles of 1837-38, but in the interval Barracks had been erected for a comparatively large force of Infantry, Cavalry, and Artillery in the neighborhood east of the Fort, by the Imperial authorities. The main entrance to the Fort is on the west side, where formerly, to some extent, there was a fossé ditch, or moat with a wooden crossing and portcullis. Under the Act 19, Vic. Cap. 45, (19 June 1856), the whole of the Reserve at Chamblé, among other Ordnance properties, was transferred to the Government of

Canada. At this period, from a want of revetment, ice breakers, or other means of protection, the river had partly washed the bank, and begun to undermine the Fort itself, on that side, since which, in the absence of any repairs whatever, large portions of the old massive wall, held together by mortar as hard as the stone itself, have given way and the interior wooden fittings stolen or carried off to be burnt. Thus abandoned and deserted, and all tenantless save "to the cranny wind," this unique and precious relic of antiquity, should no hand be stretched forth to save it, must soon fall under the weight of years, and become a prey to inevitable destruction.

#### MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

FANNY ELLSLEE has seen sixty-seven years.

VIENXTEMES, the violinist, has produced a new work, a concerto in A minor, for the violoncello.

JUDITH FELIX, a cousin of the great Rachel, has recently made a successful debut in Turin as a leading danseuse.

MISS MINNIE HAUCK'S engagement to an officer in the Italian army is announced upon what appears to be good and reliable authority.

GOUDON'S opera, "Reine de Saba," recently met with signal success at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels. It was brought out under the direct superintendance of the composer.

RICHARD WAGNER and his friends intend to start an agitation having for its object the purchase by the State of Wagner's new opera house at Bayreuth, so as to make it a national institution.

MME. CHRISTINE NILSSON is staying at Rome, where her husband, now convalescent, has been sent by the faculty for the complete re-establishment of his health. She is expected in London for the opening of the season at Drury Lane.

It is stated that Mr. Gladstone will be a member of Madame Jenny Lind's choir for the first performance in London of Bach's mass in B minor, at St. James's Hall. Mr. Gladstone is known to have a very fine voice and good knowledge of music.

GLUCK is said never to have put pen to paper until the whole work which he was about to write was completely finished and elaborated in his own mind. This is also the case with Gounod, whose prodigious memory enables him to retain a whole opera in his head without making sketch or memorandum until every detail is in its place and ready for committing to paper.

LONGFELLOW, the great American poet, though he seldom goes out of his house, being now an invalid, went twice to see Mlle. Titiens perform the part of Leonora in *La Favorita*, at Boston. He declared her the finest artist he had ever seen, and that her performance of the touching character was ideally true and beautiful. Longfellow added that the subject was a fine one for a dramatic poem and that he should like to attempt it.

At Baltimore lately, in response to an *avoué* Madlle. Titiens sang "Kathleen Mavourneen," which she rendered with such exquisite feeling as to arouse the utmost enthusiasm of the large audience. One gentleman was particularly affected and afterwards went round to congratulate the *prima donna*. He announced himself as Captain Crouch, the composer of the song, a statement which was at first received with great incredulity. Crouch being supposed to have died several years ago. After an interview with Mr. Mapleson, however, his identity was fully established. Captain Crouch, it appears, served in the Northern Army during the American Civil War. He has promised to write a companion song to "Kathleen Mavourneen," and to dedicate it to Mlle. Titiens.

MRS. SIMONS once described with no small humour to Campbell the scene of her probation on the Edinburgh boards. The grave attention of the Scotchmen, and their every reservation of praise till they were sure it was deserved, she said, had well-nigh worn out her patience. She had been used to speak to animated clay, but she now felt as if she had been speaking to stone. Successive flashes of her education that had always been sure to electrify the South fell in vain on those Northern flints. At last she said that she had worked up her powers to the most emphatic possible utterance of one passage, having previously vowed in her heart that if this could not touch the Scotch she would never again cross the Tweed. When it was finished, she paused, and looked at the audience. The deep silence was broken by a single voice exclaiming, "That's no bad!"

#### SCIENTIFIC.

We have the assurance of Mr. Frank Buckland, that "brain power in those engaged in business and literary pursuits is greatly strengthened by phosphorus conveyed in the form of oysters."

The *Mining Journal* says that one of the great objections raised against the Channel Tunnel scheme is the length of time it will take to execute it, but if we are to believe the *Liberté*, this objection has now disappeared. In fact, according to that paper, the tunnel can be completed in less than six months. It tells us that a machine has just been invented by which 55 metres of ground may be pierced through per diem, and it calculates if both the English and the French begin piercing at the same time the tunnel can be cut out in 144 days.

The following recipe is asserted to produce a cement of very superior character for uniting stone and resisting the action of water. It becomes as hard as stone, is unchangeable in the air, and resists the action of acids. It is made by mixing together 19 pounds sulphur and 42 pounds pulverised stoneware and glass. This mixture is exposed to gentle heat until the sulphur melts, when the mass is stirred until it has become thoroughly homogeneous, and is then run into moulds and permitted to cool. When required for use it is heated to 248° Fahrenheit at which temperature it melts, and may be employed in the usual manner. At 230° Fahrenheit it becomes as hard as stone, and preserves its solidity in boiling water.

PROFESSOR TERRIER of King's College, London, who has made the phenomena of sleep a special study, recently said in a lecture thereon that anything which has a tendency to abstract blood from the brain favors sleep. Exercise does this, because the moment the weary muscles are at rest the blood rushes to them to repair their loss, and is absorbed by them. Digestion and hot drinks produce the same result by drawing the blood supply from the brain to the stomach. Conversely, anything that stimulates the brain, such as sights, sounds, thought or anxiety, will keep a man awake. If we, therefore, wish for a refreshing slumber, we must begin by avoiding care and anxiety and take sufficient bodily exercise to induce the necessary muscular exhaustion. With regard to the length of sleep, Dr. Ferrer holds that the heart is not in a state of constant but of rhythmical activity, a term of action being followed by a pause of rest, during which the heart is at all intents and purposes asleep. In fact, if the pauses of the heart are all summed up, it will be found that it rests or sleeps eight hours out of the twenty-four, the sleep being in the proportion of one-third as compared with the hours of action or work. Eight hours are consequently sufficient for the adult.