

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

ACCORDING to the annual report of the Commissioners of Prisons in England and Wales, the population of the jails this year numbers 16,813, against 18,392 in the previous year. As the vast majority of criminal cases is the result of drunkenness, the great improvement is mainly attributed to the civilizing influence of the great temperance movement.

It is humiliating to think that, notwithstanding the mighty strides England has made in missionary work, the idols worshipped by the heathen of Africa and India are nearly all manufactured in the old country, and pay a very handsome profit. It is stated that the commercial value of the brass and cast iron gods shipped to heathen lands far exceed that of the Bibles, books and tracts which reach the same destination. If these statements are true, it is about time that a movement was started for the purpose of suppressing this strange branch of industry.

MATTHEW ARNOLD has not made the American Eagle screech too much. But now and then a quiet hit is made at Mr. Arnold, as the following from an American paper shews:—"Matthew Arnold, the great English thinker, must not too severely criticise the apparent idlers whom he may see leaning against houses and hitching posts in the interior villages of our country. The humblest American villager claims the same right to think as the proudest British professional."

If many more robberies take place on American railroads, the companies will be obliged to carry a military contingent with each train. A few days ago, a train at Laredo, Texas, was thrown from the track by removing a rail, the accident killing a train hand. Forty masked men then attacked the train and compelled the conductor to surrender about \$8,000 from the express car.

THERE is some talk about Lord Coleridge becoming the next Lord Chancellor. After the recent festive utterances of his Lordship in America the elevation would scatter consternation in the Conservative House of Lords. A thoroughgoing Radical in the place of highest authority would be but a tottering pillar of support to the House that is now bearing the strain from outside assaults. But extreme views are generally modified when elevation comes.

THE President of the United States appoints the 29th day of November to be observed as a day of National Thanksgiving. There is a pious air about the proclamation which is refreshing. After recounting the many providential blessings bestowed on the country, the President says:—"I do, therefore, recommend that on the day above appointed, the people rest from their accustomed labours, and meeting in their several places of worship, express their devout gratitude to God that He hath dealt so bountifully with this nation, and to pray that His grace and divine favor may abide with it forever."

THE wheat crop of France shows a decided falling off from the crops of previous years. In 1882 that country was obliged to import over 40,000,000 bushels of wheat from this continent, and this year she will need more. America will be benefitted by this extra demand and shews the wisdom of making this Continent by every possible means, the granary of the world.

THE Chinese question is looming up in Russia. The valley of the Amoor, which is one of the most fertile and valuable of the Russian possessions, is rapidly filling up with Chinese emigrants, despite the efforts of the authorities to keep them out. All other plans having failed to regulate the disagreeable features of this emigration, so restrictive measures are now being pushed forward by the Government.

BISMARCK is preparing a bill to check the flow of young emigrants from the Fatherland. The bill aims to prevent the departure of young men liable to military service to America and elsewhere, and is the result of a fear on the part of the Prince that the available military strength of the Empire may be too seriously lessened by the present rate of emigration. The bill will provoke bitter opposition in the Reichstag, and also much humour in the German press. For instance, Bismarck finds that the country possesses 2,000,000 widows, and yet so many Germans seek their partners in the land of Columbus.

It will be noted with satisfaction that the material hitherto purchased in England for the use of our militia will now be bought in Canada. Tenders were advertised for and the result has been most gratifying to Canada. The wonder is that the country remained so long quiet on the subject, and the present precedent will add force to many other reforms needed in the same direction.

A no-rent agitation is likely to arise in a very unexpected quarter. Many thousands of the London poor are compelled through their poverty, to live in the most unsavoury dwellings. The extortionate rack-rents demanded, and the summary power of eviction too commonly exercised by the landlords are helping the movement forward. The agitation has aroused party feeling on the question, and it is not unlikely that the conservative party at the next election, will pose as the heroes and leaders of an agitation for better dwellings, erected by State money, for the London Poor.

WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE seems to be gaining ground. The City Council of Ottawa has followed the example of Toronto, in memorializing the Ontario legislature to confer electoral rights upon all women possessed of the requisite property qualification. The Methodist Conference passed a resolution demanding that women be allowed to vote for prohibition. The legislature of Washington Territory has passed a bill granting women the rights of suffrage, and that too by a majority of 70 to 14. And at the Convention lately held at Leeds, England, it was declared by an overwhelming majority that women should have equal suffrage rights with men.

THE formation of a Citizens Gas Company in one of our Canadian towns has brought down the price of gas to reasonable rates. Gas in some of our towns costs as much as \$3.25 per thousand feet, but in Montreal the Citizen's Company has brought the price of gas down to less than \$2 per thousand feet.

THE receipts of the United States Government for October were \$31,037,269 against \$32,162,382 in the corresponding month last year, the decrease occurring wholly in the Customs revenue. For the first four months of the current fiscal year the receipts were \$124,369,983, a decrease of more than \$20,000,000 from those of last year, while

the expenditure has decreased about \$9,000,000, or from \$98,906,661 in 1882 for \$89,918,200 this year. The total interest-bearing debt now outstanding is \$1,307,446,000, and there is \$364,347,504 in cash in the Treasury.

DR. MULVANEY has delivered an address before the Canadian Institute, Toronto, and severely attacked the Canadian "Royal Society." He noted that it was notorious that the best names among Canadian literature were not in its list of members, while obscure writers of doggerel were chosen in preference to authors of poems of high merit; one of them being an honored contributor to the *Century*. There may be much truth in the speaker's words, but he does injury to the point when he calls the society a "flunkey brotherhood of imbeciles."

THE number of immigrants that arrived in the Dominion during the month of October was 21,181, which, added to the 154,752 arrived since the first January, makes a total of 166,933 arrivals from the beginning of the calendar year to the end of October.

THE number of representatives in the British Parliament has not been sensibly increased for nearly a century. The reform measure about to be introduced will move in the assimilation of the town and county franchise, and the merging of the boroughs into the counties. The anomaly of the present position may be seen when it is remembered that one hundred and forty-two boroughs in Great Britain, with a population of 1,751,000, return one hundred and seventy-six members, while four cities, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham and Glasgow, with a population of 1,832,000, return only twelve members.

EVERY phase of philanthropy, and every craze of a community may be found in the vast city of London. The latest is an organization for the care of the outcast cats of London. Already there exists similar associations for the protection of dogs and birds. Now, at Battersea, philanthropic people by paying the small charge of thirty-six cents per week may claim "board, lodging, and attendance," for some outcast cat. Londoners, and visitors to London, have often wished that the feline tribe, which make night hideous in that great city, could be captured and imprisoned in a cat asylum.

THE Porte denies the right of M. de Lesseps to construct a *new* canal without a fresh firman. It is conceded that he is within the powers granted when he proposes to widen the present canal, but the exclusive power given to him refers to the present undertaking, and to it alone.

NEXT week will probably find England with one of the largest strikes on record. In the North Midland coalfield, a conference representing 178,000 miners decided, that unless there was an advance of 15 per cent. on the present rate of wages, the men would go out on strike the first week of December.

FRANCE and China are drifting into war, and the celestials are as anxious as possible to cross arms with the Frenchman. It is reported that almost every town is inflamed with the idea of fighting to keep the intruder from the land of China.

THE sudden approach of winter, with all the accompaniments of drifting snow and fierce howling winds, has been very disastrous to shipping. Many wrecks have occurred with no small loss of life.