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## Notes of the Week.

Mr. Sanford Fleming, the well known engineer, is the author of a new proposal for a trans-Pacific cable, which he intends submitting to the Canadian and Australian Governments. It contains four alternate routes, all of which will have Vancouver as the Canadian terminus. The length of the shortest routes, including branches, would be 6,224 and of the longest 8,264 nautical miles. The cost of the former is estimated at £1,380,000, and of the latter, £1,825,000. The proposed rate of 2s. for transmission over the new cable would reduce the rate between Australia and England to 3s. 3d. per word, instead of 4s. 9d. as at present.

There are at least some old ministers whom the people do not grow weary of hearing. Of Dr. Newman Hall, of London, who is seventy-seven years old, Dr. Cuyler says: "He never preached oftener and never better than now." Dr. Cuyler is himself a fine example of a Christian minister, giving to the world the ripened and mellow fruit of a green old age; for though he does not preach as frequently as in former years, there are, perhaps, few things in current Christian literature more eagerly read and with greater profit than Dr. Cuyler's short articles, in which he gives forth so acceptably the ripened fruits of Christian knowledge and experience. His fitly spoken words are like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

President Cleveland's annual message to Congress has appeared and provoked as usual a large amount of comment and criticism both friendly and hostile. However opinions may differ as to the contents of the message, it is agreed on all hands that the President is not lacking in the matter of having convictions, and all acknowledge his courage and independence in acting up to them, and these are qualities which always command respect. It has been President Cleveland's lot to hold office in his second term during a particularly trying time, and the consensus of public opinion both at home and abroad now unquestionably is, that he has discharged his delicate, most difficult and overwhelmingly responsible duties in such a manner as shall carry his name down in the history of his country as one of the most honest, upright and capable of its long line of presidents.

The English Presbyterian Synod has for some time been making laudable attempts to grapple with the subject of ministerial inefficiency, closely connected with that which has for some time been discussed in our columns, and the following is the recommendation of the Presbytery of Manchester: "That if it should come to the knowledge of the Presbytery that the state of a congregation was seriously unsatisfactory, they should take immediate steps to ascertain the cause, and use all means to remedy the state of things. If the Presbytery found that the ends of the ministry were not served, and that the responsibility lay with the minister, and that there was no hope of any good result from the continuance of the minister with the congregation, then there should be a separation." With regard to this the *Halifax Presbyterian Witness* very pertinently says, "Who is to take the first step? It is easy to say what ought to be done, but it is not easy to insure its being done."

The statement now being made in the newspapers that the death of the late Professor Tyndall was caused by an overdose of chloral, brings into notice what is generally alleged to be the case, that the use of narcotics of this kind is becoming so prevalent as to be a source of real danger and evil in the community. The "morphine habit" prevails, physicians say, to an extent of which very few have any conception. One of its worst features is that people can indulge in this habit in secrecy, and this accounts for its prevalence, for many do not care for the publicity which indulging in alcohol necessarily entails. This habit is said to prevail most largely among women and its use often

begins by taking laudanum as a medicine, and when the sensation produced is recognized, a natural craving for its continuance sets in, and the habit becomes formed and fixed. Let those who may have real occasion to use this drug, beware; a word to the wise should be sufficient.

It will be pretty generally agreed that in the present age the world is not suffering from a lack of religious conventions. No doubt these are good things in their way, but there are good things of which it is possible to have too much, and the religious convention belongs to this category. Vast amounts of time and money are spent in these gatherings, great and small, and there is a danger of coming to look upon them as ends rather than means, when people have met together, made and listened to addresses, considered the ways and means of carrying on a good work, passed resolutions, appointed committees, etc., they too often appear to think that their grand purpose is effected and the accomplishment of the work insured. If only Christian people would address themselves cheerfully and earnestly to the work which lies ready to their hands in their own churches and communities, probably no good cause would suffer greatly if half the great religious conventions projected for the coming year should fail to be held.

Mr. J. Francis Brame, an emigration agent for the Dominion in Birmingham, England, writing to Winnipeg, proposes to bring out in early spring a number of female domestic servants, English girls of good reputation and experienced in various household duties. He offers to bring as many girls as may be required at a cost of \$40 for each person, each one to come out upon a written agreement to remain for one year where she has been engaged, and to pay back out of her wages the \$40 required to pay her passage. Mr. Brame says that in making this visit he wishes to carry along with him as large an army of well-selected men and women, farmers, mechanics, domestics, possessing among them as much money, intelligence and good reputation as it is possible to collect together; to leave them at various places where they will be sure of a welcome and will be thus satisfied, and so to create the means for circulating glad tidings of success for these people over a wide area, and then to insure a greater tide of emigration to Canada during the ensuing year.

We are in hearty sympathy with the agitation for vestibule cars on the street railway for the comfort and even the safety of the motor men. The discomfort and danger they are subjected to in winter, as the cars are at present is very great indeed, and such as a humane man would not willingly expose his horses or cows to. Why should we be less mindful of the comfort and welfare of men to whom the public are so much indebted, and whose safety depends to a very large extent upon their being so protected that they shall at all times be in a fit state to perform their responsible duties. If in other places it is thought necessary to have vestibule cars for the sake of the men, why not in Toronto. The profits made by the street railway company ought to enable it to do this, and the more so that this arrangement could be made at not a very great outlay. Besides it will even in a low sense pay the company well to be careful of its men, give them this evidence of its kindly feeling toward them, and the public may well show its regard for them by insisting upon so necessary and urgent an improvement.

The death a few days ago of Professor Tyndall, removes one, who for a long time, has held a foremost place in the ranks of science. Born in a humble station, his career supplies another to the many shining illustrations of the high position in the walks of science to which brains, application and character may raise a man. His contributions to science have been many and so important that his name will be perpetuated and rank side by side with that of the many others which the intellectual activity of our age has produced. It is to be regretted that his high rank as a scientist has been taken advantage

of by many to justify their unbelief in matters of religion, quoting him as an example and warrant. It does not follow, however, and history fully demonstrates, that one being of the highest authority as a scientist is also for that reason an authority and fitted to be a guide in questions of faith and in the spiritual life. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The final and full returns of the results in their pecuniary aspect of the great miners' strike in England, just ended through the good offices of Lord Rosebery, make gruesome reading. It lasted for sixteen weeks. The usual average output of coal for that period amounted to 63,000,000 tons; it dropped to 39,000,000 tons. The estimated loss to mine owners, ironmasters, railways, etc., was over 66¼ millions of dollars. The total general loss is placed at over 161 millions of dollars. The number of workers rendered idle was 1,008,250 which meant 3,511,245 persons in a destitute condition. Add to this the sadness of heart, the bitterness engendered between class and class, the actual suffering endured through poverty and hunger, the increase of disease and liability to disease through the want of sufficient food, the earnings of bygone years exhausted, the long time it will take to recover what has been lost, in many cases the impossibility of ever doing so, the moral deterioration wrought in numberless cases by weeks of enforced idleness under circumstances that produced and kept alive embittered and angry feeling, and what a dark picture does a great strike present to the imagination. And no sooner is this strike over, than one involving 117,000 working miners, their families and all the other connected interests is brought on in Scotland. These are melancholy and humiliating exhibitions of the state of society in this nineteenth century of the Christian era. Here is a field inviting the attention and benevolent labours of some noble, Christian philanthropist, and the man who shall show the way to a permanent better state of things in this department of human well-being will deserve to have his name enrolled among the greatest benefactors of mankind.

The Gothenburg system of regulating the liquor traffic to which frequent reference is just now made takes its name from the city so called in Sweden. The municipal council in 1865 held an enquiry regarding the cause of pauperism, and the combined municipal wisdom decided it to result from excessive drinking among the working classes. Of course, that much had been accomplished long before in many countries, but the people of Gothenburg set about providing a remedy. The municipality having the sole control of the matter, transferred to a company the exclusive right to sell brandy and other alcoholic liquors, that being in accordance with the recommendation of the inquiry committee. The town council handed over 36 licenses to the company, the by-laws received Royal sanction, and business was commenced within the year of the inquiry. The company was organized under special regulations designed to remove from vendors all temptation to encourage or force sales. It was required that all profits of the company above 6 per cent. on invested capital should be handed over to the municipality for charitable purposes. Managers appointed for the various retail establishments should be paid by salary, they should keep on hand a supply of hot and cold food, and receive a proportion of the profits from such sale, in addition to their salaries. The hours for doing business are prescribed, special provision being made for special days such as holidays and pay days. The consumption of spirituous liquors has decreased from 14.61 quarts per inhabitant in 1877 to 6.49 in 1891; the average annual profit being above \$325,000. Prohibition practically prevails in the country districts, and in two villages no liquor is sold. The system has spread with equal rapidity in Norway, almost all the towns having granted monopolies for the sale of alcoholic liquors.