

Notes and Comments.

Servia, under the rule of Prince Milan, promises to become a very paradise for criminals. That merciful potentate is about to take a step which, however fatal it may prove to the community at large, will doubtless gain him the unbounded applause of Mr. Peter Taylor and his supporters. At a recent meeting of the Cabinet he announced his intention of signing no more death warrants, and of pardoning any convict who shows true repentance. The Servians may therefore look forward to a pretty large increase of crime in their midst, with a corresponding show of deep contrition among their criminals.

The Fisk-Stokes case furnishes two cases of "remarkable coincidence" which are worthy of being noted down. It will be remembered that at the very moment when Fisk breathed his last, his bust, which stood in one of the offices in the Opera House, fell with a crash from its standing place and was completely shattered. Now some lover of the curious—or shall we say the sensational—points out that the sentence of Stokes was pronounced exactly one year, to the minute, from the time when Fisk was murdered. On the 6th instant, at nine minutes to eleven, Judge Boardman consigned Stokes to death by hanging; at nine minutes to eleven, on the 6th of January, 1872, James Fisk gave a convulsive gasp and died.

A bill has recently been presented to the Cantonal Council of Lucerne which, if passed, promised to be effective of much good to the classes whom it is intended to benefit. Its object is especially to direct the working of factories, and to regulate the employment of children in such establishments. By its provisions no child under twelve years of age may be employed in factory labour, and children over fourteen no longer than six hours a day; while those of schooling age may not be employed at all during school hours. No infants are to be admitted to factories where poisonous matter is used. No night labour of any kind is to be permitted in any factory except by the express permission of the Cantonal Council; and finally a day's work for adults will consist of no more than twelve hours. What would our nine hours agitators say to the last clause?

"It is a good thing," says the adage, "to have friends at court." But it is a very much better thing to be oneself at court. This was curiously exemplified some weeks ago at Windsor, on the occasion of the mayor's inaugural banquet. The evening fixed for the festivity was unfortunately that of a Saturday, when all houses of public entertainment are compelled by law to close at eleven o'clock. As the hour for closing approached, some of the party exhibited a disinclination to abandon their enjoyments. Some one at once suggested that, as there were three magistrates, a petty session should be held, and that the landlord should apply for permission to keep open an extra hour. This suggestion was accordingly acted upon. The application was formally made and formally granted, and the festivities were continued until twelve o'clock.

The French colony of Pondicherry would appear to be, at present, in a condition of most lenten sombreness, which is the more felt by the inhabitants, as until lately the city was celebrated throughout all India for its gaiety. This state of things is due to a recent order of the Governor prohibiting dancing. His Excellency, worthy man, is, it seems, a patriot, and maintains that no Frenchman should dance so long as the hated Prussians occupy any portion of the "sacred soil" of France, and any cheerful person who is discovered indulging in graceful movements to the sound of music incurs his Excellency's serious displeasure. As this rule, of course, equally applies to Frenchwomen as to Frenchmen, dancing in Pondicherry has practically come to an end, or is only practised by stealth under almost insuperable difficulties. The Governor himself sets an example of wholesome austerity, and his "evenings at home" are described as "lenten entertainments."

Toronto creditors who desire for better security to lodge their debtors in gaol would do well to think twice and count the cost before they take out their writs of *capias*. From present appearances it would seem that petty debtors thus deprived of their liberty are no small expense to their detainers. In fact, they seem on the whole to have a very jolly time of it. One of these gentlemen writes, dating from the abode he facetiously terms The Palace: "A debtor lying here for any length of time would get so fat that by going out he would not be able to work after living so long on the luxuries of the Palace. We have for breakfast, at the expense of our worthy creditors who put us here, coffee, sausage, potatoes and toast; for dinner, soup, vegetables, roast beef and apple-pudding; for tea, beefsteak and onions, mush and milk; pickled cabbage, sour kront (couldn't a German live where kront can be had?) We have good beds, warm rooms, the Bible and daily papers to read, and a number of waiters to bring in wood, water, and clean up our room."

Lord Selborne, since his elevation to the Chancellorship, has introduced two new and important reforms, the one affecting his own personal privileges, and the other the whole system of legal education. In the first instance his lordship has decided to have no such list of clergymen recommended for appointments to livings as has been adopted by previous Lord Chancellors of England, but on any vacancy occurring to seek out the most fitting clergyman for presentation. In the second case his lordship has initiated a new system of legal education which has been introduced into Parliament, and a complete scheme, matured by a committee, submitted to the Inns of Court. This scheme contemplates the abolition of the senseless customs (sanctified only by antiquity) through which the English layman is transformed into a barrister, and the substitution of a comprehensive system of education and examination. Should this plan be adopted, the race of barristers qualified by dinners, or by mere attendance at lectures or in chambers, or by a slight and fragmentary examination, will disappear, and every one henceforward called to the Bar will be required to show a satisfactory knowledge of Roman Civil Law, of the Law of Real and Personal Property, and of both Common Law and Equity.

NEW BOOKS.

THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF A PHAETON. A Novel. By Wm. Black, author of "Love or Marriage," &c. New York: Harper & Bros. Montreal: Dawson Bros. pp. 216. Paper, 75 cents.

Under this title, Mr. Black gives us a charming account of a "Cruise on Wheels" to the North Country. The persons composing the party are four in number, the writer, his lady—Queen Titania—Miss Bell, more generally known as Lady Bell, and a young Prussian Lieutenant of Uhlans, fresh from Sedan and Paris. The latter at first threatens to become a dead-weight, and is especially an object of a mild form of dislike to Miss Bell, who is half engaged to a young English lawyer. Unfortunately for himself, Arthur Ashburton plays his cards but badly, behaves in a jealous, ill-tempered, boorish manner, and generally earns the encomiums bestowed upon him by our young Uhlan—"a pitiful fellow—a very pitiful fellow indeed." By the time the party reach their destination Miss Bell has entirely got rid of her Germanophobia. Where at starting she would invariably oppose the Prussian, she now as invariably sides with him, declaring that "Count von Rosen is always right." The sequel can be guessed.

A WOMAN'S VENGEANCE. A Novel. By James Payn, author of "Curlyon's Year," &c. New York: Harper & Bros. Montreal: Dawson Bros. pp. 132. Paper, 50 cents.

This writer is too well known to need much comment. His last work is in his peculiarly indescribable style, and will doubtless be read with much interest, some sympathy, and, towards the close, not a little awe. Mrs. Arthur Tyndall No. 1 is, fortunately for mankind in general, not a common character; and the mode which she selects to revenge herself upon her husband for marrying again after there was every reason to suppose that she had been killed, is as unique as it is horrible. Some of the minor characters in the book are, to our taste, far more pleasant company than the hero and heroine. There is, for instance, Mr. Magus, with his old-fashioned ideas on the duello, who challenges Mr. Paul Jones in a chivalrously blood-thirsty manner that makes that pitiful young scoundrel's blood run cold. There is, too, honest Jack Adair, who, on being applied to for assistance by Mr. Jones in the scrape aforesaid, cleverly works on his fears until he obtains the return to his friend Tyndall of the certain sums Mr. Paul had won by swindling at cards. Some of the scenes are admirably drawn, but on the whole the author has drawn pretty largely on the fiction-writer's prerogative.

FOR THE KING. By Charles Gibson, author of "Robin Gray," &c. New York: Harper & Bros. Montreal: Dawson Bros.

This is a historical story, founded on the rebellion of 1745, which deserves something more than ordinary attention. The author has evidently carefully studied his subject, and the result is a most pleasant historical sketch, in which the great personages of the period connected with the movement are made to pass before the reader in company with characters of the author's creation. It is an excellent story, told with picturesque clearness and possessing unflagging interest.

NEVER AGAIN. By W. S. Mayo, M.D., author of "Kaloolah." New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons. Montreal: Dawson Bros.

We can give our readers no better idea of the value of this book than by quoting a passage which the author puts into the mouth of one of his pet characters.

"Martin Chuzzlewit is mentioned. 'How do you like the American scenes?' 'Poor, sir, comically poor! But the most comical thing is that an apology should have been thought necessary. I never saw or heard yet of an American who has expressed the slightest anger at them. Many a one has felt provoked with Dickens that he did not put more point and force and truth in them—there was such a good chance, and no one would have objected to the lash well laid on, even if it did tingle his own hide a little; but all Dickens' American work is so dainty that there is no light of consciousness in which we can hang it that makes it look like a picture at all. It is a kind of thrashing roundabout with a ridiculous old broom-handle, rather than a raw hide. He reminds one of a blind teamster, he whips his whip around his head quite vigorously, and makes a devil of a cracking, but never really touches the raw.'"

A PROGRESSIVE GRAMMAR OF THE ENGLISH TONGUE: Based on the Results of Modern Philology. By Prof. William Swinton, A.M. New York: Harper & Bros. Montreal: Dawson Bros. 12mo, pp. 220. Half-roan, 75 cents.

The study of grammar, though a very necessary, is without doubt a most unattractive branch of learning. Prof. Swinton does not pretend in his little work to have invested it with any new interest or attraction, but he certainly has done much to lighten and smooth what has always been a most rugged path. His rules and definitions are clear, simple, and practical, and will be easily understood by any boy not absolutely a dunce. A remarkable feature of this work is the omission of Orthography and Prosody, as branches not properly belonging to English Grammar. The book comes to us with high recommendations, and we have no doubt, from what we have seen of it, that it will speedily come into general use.

THE WANDERING HEIR. A Christmas Story. By Charles Reade. Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Co. Montreal: Dawson Bros. pp. 206. Paper, 50 cents.

This story was written by Charles Reade expressly for the Christmas number of the *Graphic*. The edition before us is the Canadian copyright, and forms one of the series of works by living authors published by Messrs. Hunter, Rose & Co. The story is full of interest, and, like most of Charles Reade's works, is based upon facts. The date at which it is fixed is about the middle of the last century. The wandering heir is, as implied in the title, the rightful owner of great estates, but an exile and a wanderer in a strange land. For years he serves as a slave in Philadelphia, but finally returns to England, and recovers his possessions after a trial that takes us on to 1872 and the Tichborne case.

News of the Week.

THE DOMINION.—The Reform Banquet at Toronto on the 8th instant was attended by some 400 guests. The Ottawa Board of Trade intends entertaining members of the Dominion Board at a grand banquet on the occasion of the approaching annual meeting of the latter body. Operations on the Credit Valley Railway were commenced on Thursday week. An oil refinery near the Great Western Railway, London, took fire and exploded last week, causing much damage to the building, and consuming an oil train. On the 3th instant the rails were laid on the first section of the Hamilton and Lake Erie Railway. The road will connect with the Canada Southern and the Canada Air Line, being built by the Great Western. It is to be worked on a joint arrangement by the three companies, on a lease securing interest as cost, and will thus make Hamilton a lake port from the country supplied by the Grand Trunk, the Canada Southern, Canada Air Line, and Great Western. H. E. the Governor-General and Lady Dufferin arrived in Montreal from Quebec on Friday last. On Monday they held a drawing-room, which was largely attended.

UNITED STATES.—Stokes' counsel are confident of being able to secure a new trial. A *Herald* Washington despatch says that the cause of the misunderstanding between the United States and Spanish Governments has been removed, and their relations are now quite friendly. There has been a heavy snow-fall in Minnesota by which traffic was greatly impeded. Several deaths from freezing have occurred.

GREAT BRITAIN.—Gullford Onslow and Mr. George Whalley, members of Parliament, have been summoned by the Crown to appear in the Court of Queen's Bench on the 20th instant, for having in speeches delivered in St. James' Hall accused Sir John Duke Coleridge of being engaged in a conspiracy against the Tichborne claimant. Fifty-nine Yarmouth fishermen were drowned in a recent gale. In a speech recently delivered at the Devonshire Chamber of Agriculture Sir Stafford Northcote urged the speedy payment of the damages awarded by the Geneva Tribunal. The trial of the Tichborne claimant on the charge of perjury will commence on the 23rd of April. The total number of emigrants that left Liverpool during the year 1872 for America was 161,000. A despatch from Manchester announces that several cotton spinners in that city have failed. The ex-Emperor Napoleon died at Chislehurst on Thursday, the 9th, at 10:45 a.m. The funeral took place on Wednesday. At latest advices the Empress Eugenie is seriously indisposed, and her condition causes much alarm amongst her friends. Particulars of the circumstances attending the ex-Emperor's death will be found in another column.

FRANCE.—Despatches from Paris say that numerous officers of the French army have applied for leave of absence to attend the funeral of Napoleon, but they have in all cases been refused, excepting where the applicant was formerly connected with the Emperor's Household. Latest despatches state that it was feared that some of the Paris journalists would attempt a demonstration on the day of Napoleon's funeral. Prince Napoleon's action against the Prefect of Police for illegal expulsion from France has received a preliminary hearing. M. Thiers has instructed the French Ambassador at Vienna to convey to Prime Minister Andrássy the expression of deep regret of the French Government at the indiscreet publications of the Duc de Grammont. A rupture has taken place in the Left Centre. At a recent meeting of the deputies belonging to that party, M. Christophe, a Radical, was elected President, whereupon Casimir Perier and his friends immediately withdrew and joined the Right. It is said that the Bonapartist deputies will also unite with the Right. *L'Indépendance Belge* publishes a letter from Count Von Bismarck, in answer to assertions made by the Duc de Grammont. The Count shows that Austria tried to dissuade France from going to war with Prussia, and explicitly reserved her right to remain neutral, and that France, after the war, declared she asked for alliance and Austria refused. The *Journal Officiel* announces the appointment of M. Corneille as French Ambassador at the Vatican in place of M. Bourgoing, who resigned.

GERMANY.—A recent number of the Prussian *Cross Gazette* contains an article against England. The invasion of Khiva by the Russians, the acquisition by Prussia of Bologna Bay and the United States expedition to the Sandwich Islands are, it says, so many attacks on England's prestige. The United States, combined with Germany, might divide the world between them. The *Post* in an article, evidently inspired by Government, says the proclamation of the Dogma of Papal Infallibility has created a new Catholic creed, and its believers should be treated in the same manner as the members of other new religious societies.

SPAIN.—It is stated that the Carlist insurrection in Spain is assuming formidable proportions. Large numbers of insurgents have appeared in several Provinces fully armed and equipped, and are preparing to commence active hostilities. The Government is becoming alarmed at the activity of the leaders in the movement, and measures of a precautionary nature are being instituted to defeat the plans of the insurgents. Orders for the concentration of large bodies of troops at different points, to guard against surprise, have been issued. The insurgent leaders are kept well informed of all the movements of the Government forces. Several minor engagements have taken place, in which the Carlists were defeated. A great popular demonstration in favour of the abolition of slavery in Porto Rico was made in Madrid on Saturday. The King has signed a concession to a Spanish company for a telegraphic cable from Cadiz to Cuba, by way of the Canaries and Tenerife. The Anti-Porto Rico Reform League of this city have signed a manifesto, protesting against the passage of the bill providing for the emancipation of the slaves on that island. Admiral Topete was asked to sign the manifesto, but refused to do so.

ITALY.—A subscription has been opened at Milan for a monument to Napoleon. In the session of the Italian Chamber on Friday last Signor Lausa, Minister of the Interior, formally announced the death of Napoleon. He said the Italian Government learned of the death of the ex-Emperor with the deepest regret. It was impossible to forget that Napoleon contributed greatly to secure the unity of Italy. The eulogistic remarks of the Minister were received with warm applause by the members.

RUSSIA.—The Russian budget for 1873 shows a surplus of receipts over expenditures. A special despatch from St. Petersburg to the *London Observer*, says: Count Schouvaloff has been sent abroad to negotiate a marriage between a Prince whose name is not given, and the daughter of the Czar.

INDIA.—A despatch from Bombay says, a report has reached that city that a terrible earthquake has occurred at Soonghur, a town in India, a detached district of Baroda Dominion, 114 miles north of Bombay; 1,500 persons are said to have been killed in the town alone. Nothing has been heard from the surrounding country, but it is feared that there has been much additional loss of life.

CHINA.—The question which arose concerning the manner in which foreign representatives should enter the presence of the Emperor of China has been settled. The Chinese officials yielding to the demands of the foreigners.