

The silver currency of India has depreciated twenty five per cent., causing much agitation in financial circles. Again the people demand the apparently unattainable gold standard, and besiege the Government for some satisfactory adjustment. To make matters worse, a drought prevails throughout India, and an outbreak of cholera has already occurred. The sanitary commissioner reports that the foul tanks in which water is stored are the chief causes of the disease. It is to be hoped that the cholera may soon be stayed, India has too often felt the scourge.

The colliers of Durham are still holding their own in the strike. Their cause is, however, losing much of its popularity now that the ironworkers, who are dependent on the Durham coal-mines for their means of livelihood, are thrown out of work, and the public purse is appealed to on their behalf. The funds of the 90,000 strikers are getting low, and, except in the immediate neighborhood of the mines, the price of coal has not advanced, nor has any scarcity of fuel been felt. It is thought that work in the mines will soon be resumed—perhaps with no concession to the laborers.

After a few years of quiet in Bulgaria the Premier Stambouloff brings up an unsettled matter of dispute. Five years ago, when Prince Ferdinand became the head of the Principality, Russia denounced him as a usurper. Diplomacy forbade the other European nations to interfere, but both England and Austria pledged themselves to recognize him in the future. They have not done so, and Stambouloff, fearing or feigning to fear a Russian invasion, demands the redemption of the promise. The foreign envoys regret extremely that the request has been made at a time when European affairs are much disturbed.

The rather unpleasant feelings which have been shown for some little time between France and England as to the Egyptian boundaries, the limits of Siam, and the Newfoundland squabble have culminated in the arrest and harsh treatment of some English travellers in France. As yet, Lord Dufferin has made no expostulation, but he may be depended on to quietly change the tenor of the French Government's action. France is still in terror over the dynamite outrages, and the always-excitabile people are fearful of foreigners. The probability is that when the scare subsides the suspects will be released and well recompensed by the Government for their unjust detention.

We prophesy that in a few years the women of England, Canada and the United States will have the right to exercise their power at all elections. Already the New York Assembly has granted full franchise to the women of that State. The Massachusetts Legislative Committee have again referred the question to the next General Council. The movement is far from unpopular in the British House of Commons, and its acceptance by the House of Lords is a forgone conclusion. Lord Salisbury gives the following well-turned expression to his thought on the subject.—“Women have already a great deal of power; it is only fair that they should possess responsibility as well.”

There is trouble in India for the Englishman. The natives at Pahang have revolted from British protection. The revolt is ostensibly against the Sultan, but the fact that the natives have besieged the town of Pekan, where Europeans live in numbers, points to a different conclusion. The Sultan is quietly siding with his people, and is thoroughly out of sympathy with the British Government. Like many Indian potentates, he is dissatisfied with the Imperial system of collecting private revenues to dispense in the form of pensions. The European women have been sent from Pekan to a place of safety, and three men-of-war, the *Hyacinth*, the *Rattler* and the *Phlox*, are ordered to the scene of action.

The experimental Brassey Colony at Qu'Appelle is interesting to intending emigrants to Canada. It is the first off-shoot of the “Canadian Co-operative Colonization Company,” of which Lord Brassey is the President and the financial backer. Forty-five thousand acres of land have been purchased from the Government, on which the emigrants, under direction, have erected houses and barns and have begun a course of practical farming. When they have mastered the difficulties of agriculture under these wholly new conditions, assistance is given in securing suitable tracts of free lands which may then be taken up and farmed intelligently. A more patriotic and sensible scheme of aiding and encouraging immigration has never been projected.

To read that the Dahomeyans have taken Porto Novo from the French means very little to the world in general beyond a mere line in a newspaper. Only a very few people have any idea of the French possessions in Africa on the Cape Verde coast, in Senegambia and Dahomey, so that the books of Pierre Loti, a French naval officer, who is the Rudyard Kipling of the French soldier and sailor in Africa, are at present well worth reading. From the comparative civilization of Algeria to the vast monotony of the palms and sands of the Cape Verde settlements, and the splendid streams, forests and grass-covered plains of Senegambia, the country is so great that France may well cover it. The heat indeed is terrific, but the real cause of discontent to the French soldier in Africa is the distance which lies between him and home, the isolation and the long empty days when the country is quiet. Such trouble as there now is in Dahomey will not cause any disquiet to the French Government, as may be seen by Pierre Loti's book, “A Spahi,” which is more a disquisition than a story.

Every few days we read of accidents resulting from improperly-handled firearms. Usually they are in the hands of children, or of that unsuspecting individual “who did not know it was loaded.” It has been proposed that a system of licenses to restrict the sale of firearms be enforced, but as Sir William Harcourt states that such an act is “impossible,” Great Britain will have to put up with the actions of the small boy and his small-witted colleagues for an indefinite time. Perhaps if some great statesman or Lord Chief Justice were to be the victim of a playfully-aimed pistol more precaution would be taken. It is a pity that the experiment is not to be tried. If it were found to work satisfactorily many governments would be willing to introduce a similar measure.

Aluminium, no longer the metal of the future but of the present, is now being used in a great variety of ways. A novel steamboat recently launched has been much admired for its light graceful body. The steamboat, which is 20 ft. by 5 ft., is made entirely of aluminium—the motor used is naphtha, equal to a two-horse power. This important mineral has also been found to give a durable toughness to steel castings, and is now much used for that purpose. Sir Henry Bessemer, the learned metallist, suggests that instead of the proposed issue in England of a £1 note, that a redeemable coin made of aluminium be used. The coin, which would be slightly alloyed, would be exceedingly difficult to counterfeit, and would be of light weight. A decided improvement on the greasy note issue we handle!

We note the frequency of such headings in our exchanges as “Pensions for the Aged and Infirm.” Many schemes are proposed to bring about the desired result. Germany has already solved the problem, but her solution does not agree with our doctrine of non-interference in the liberty of the individual. It is proposed that workmen shall lay aside a percentage of their wages, or that the employer shall withhold a percentage; in either case the savings are to be put out at interest for the after benefit of the workman. Or that the general tax be increased and a pension given by the Government. It is carefully estimated that one-fourth of the Englishmen who attain their sixty-fifth year become paupers, frequently through no fault of their own. Strangely enough, Japan is the only nation that can boast of giving due reverence and consideration to the hoary head.

Through the *Fortnightly Review* the Rev. H. Haws gives some interesting information about Morocco. A primitive simplicity and barbarity prevail in that monarchy. The Sultan allows no modern improvements, the threshing machine, the barrow, the steamboat and even our ordinary carriage on wheels are unthought-of luxuries. The natives are at war with the Sultan because of the oppressive taxation which he tries to enforce, and it is thought that his rule will shortly end. France and Spain are vying with England by claiming the sovereignty of the African coast. Italy demands Tripoli, while Germany clamors for the Zaffarine and adjacent coasts. Spain, though nearly bankrupt, has laid a submarine cable to Mebella. France, by building railroads, hopes to divert African trade through French territory. The burning question is to whom Tangier shall belong. Tangier has a most important harbor and coaling station, and for the benefit of English commerce and especially on account of the trade with India it should be under British rule.

The women of the United States have sent a ship to starving Russia. The freight is of corn to the value of \$60,000 at the beginning of the journey, and it increases in value at every knot of the vessel's journey. Eleven women were appointed in each congressional district to circulate information about the famine-stricken people and to solicit money or grain. The city of Washington has offered to pay all the expenses of the ship's passage, and by the courtesy of a steamship line two ladies will arrive in Russia shortly before the ship, when they will establish kitchens and teach economic cookery. A lady doctor also goes with this forward contingent, supplied with an ample fund of money for hospital work. We hear too often the charge of heartlessness brought against women now that Mrs. Montague's actions are being commented upon. The women of low type are fortunately few in number. The generous united action of the women of the United States is truly typical of the ready sympathy and generosity of the fair sex.

Roman officials have good reason to fear the consequences of any serious riots which may break out because of the proposed renewal of the tax on flour. Roman houses and public offices are within easier reach of an angry mob than are such buildings in either Paris or Berlin. The streets are narrow and dark, with no sign of a sidewalk, excepting in the new suburbs, and the poorer classes are not confined to any districts, but live at the very doors of the palaces and great houses of the merchants and nobility. In case of a rising of the Roman populace the back entrances of the banks and public buildings could be rushed with very little trouble. Italian taxation is already so heavy as to be a by-word, and the prospect of another necessary being levied upon would be enough to arouse a less inflammable city than Rome. Salt, tobacco and matches are government monopolies in Italy, and are sold at almost prohibitory prices; the oil and wine from a man's own vineyard are taxed; meat is only tasted twice a year by the mass of the people because of its price; and the mainstay of a working man's existence is flour in different forms, with various greens and herbs, which in Canada would be despised. It may be worth noting by the way that in that part of Italy, about Venice and Ampezzo, where polenta or cornmeal is almost the only food of the people, a kind of wasting disease prevails which was totally unknown when wheat flour was the staple instead of preparations of maize.

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