

plight, huddling on the drifting ice far from their homes; and sometimes, in their terror, they have been known to board ships and crouch on the deck. But most of them get back to land looking plump and able-bodied; and they usually go ashore at the place where they sallied forth upon the ice a month or so before.

*New York City.*

## The Editor's Portfolio.

### EDITORIAL NOTES.

MR. MICHAEL DAVITT has been doing the North-West, not in the interest of any immigration scheme or company, but simply for pleasure, and of course, as a journalist, will make use of the information he gathers during his trip. He is more than delighted with the country. He says his opinions have undergone an entire revolution. He finds that not only the soil, but the climate is excellent. He finds that the district from Calgary north is admirably adapted to mixed farming, and that south it is a fine grazing region. He purposes, says the *Calgary Tribune*, making a suggestion to the authorities at Ottawa to invite a deputation of newspaper men from the old country to take a trip next year through the North West and write up the country for their journals. This idea of Mr. Davitt's is a good one, and would undoubtedly, if carried out, have a good effect in stimulating immigration of the right sort.

THE investigations being carried on at Ottawa afford much food for thought to the Canadian people. It is not for us to express any opinion as to the guilt or innocence of the parties implicated for they are now upon their trial before a properly constituted tribunal, where no favor will be shown. But the evidence which has been made public is sufficient to convince everyone that there has been corruption and infidelity to trust on the part of both public servants and private citizens. The party in opposition offers as the only remedy for existing evils the ousting of the party in power. This is not the remedy which the country needs. It is not a question of party which should interest us most deeply, but a question of men. No party can be pure, if the individuals which compose it are corrupt and unscrupulous. When will electors insist upon pure men in preference to principles and platforms? Men whose honesty is doubtful, whose opinions are dependent upon their interest, who are more partizan than patriotic, are not the men to govern any country. We shall have a pure administration, if we refuse under any circumstances to vote for unscrupulous men. The first question with every Canadian citizen should be one of men, afterwards one of platforms. Of course the purest government may be betrayed by individuals among its members or employees, but we reduce the danger of this to a minimum when we constantly put men before opinions, and insist that our representatives shall be first of all both Christian and courageous men.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT's visit to Canada is likely to create a wide interest in the scheme of which he is the earnest advocate, an Imperial Trade League. It is a scheme which is likely to prove of very much more advantage to us in the long run than any measure of reciprocity with the United States. The British Empire is admirably adapted, because of its vast extent and the variety of its products, to form a great commercial organization within itself. Almost every want of each part of the organization could be supplied by some other part. Col. Vincent's statements

with the colonies may be somewhat at variance with the recent utterances of Lord Salisbury and others upon the subject, but the development of the scheme itself will undoubtedly create and foster a sentiment in that direction. There will be difficulties in the way, of course, both in England and in the colonies, but there are difficulties in the way of every beneficent scheme. There will be individuals and classes who will oppose the movement from motives of self interest, but not one of these difficulties appear to us insurmountable or important enough to outweigh the wide-spread or far-reaching beneficent results.

We have in Canada more and more variety of good native literature than a great many suspect. The sum of it is highly creditable to a country so young as ours. We have a number of story writers, poets, and antiquarians of whom we have just reason to be proud. But there are some departments of literary activity in which we are as yet hardly represented at all. We have no essayists, scarcely any critics, very few descriptive writers, and yet the field for these is as good here as anywhere in the world. What a pity it is that some of the capital which is lying idle should not be employed in drawing out and developing young Canadian talent in these directions.

A FRENCH nun has bequeathed one hundred thousand francs to the Academy of Sciences to be offered as a prize to the person who shall discover some means of communicating with another planet or star. The planet Mars is suggested as the most convenient to experiment upon. A writer in the *Chicago Tribune* shews how inadequate is the bequest for the purpose. An object half a yard wide or thick can be seen by the naked eye at a distance of one mile. When Mars and the earth are nearest to each other, the distance between them is, in round numbers, thirty-five millions of miles. To be seen by the naked eye then, the object in Mars then must be seventeen and a half millions of yards in width. Divide this by two thousand, the power of the biggest telescope we have, and you have eight thousand seven hundred and fifty yards as the size of the smallest object to be seen at such a distance with our largest telescope. The smallest bodies that the citizens of Mars can use then to make their thoughts and wishes known to us must be each five miles in diameter. But when Mars is nearest to the earth, the earth is in the blaze of the sun's light and nothing on it could be seen. So the objects used by us in signalling to Mars would need to be at least twenty miles in diameter, and it must be presupposed too that the Marsites have telescopes as powerful as we. The chances certainly seem to be against anyone's getting this prize.

### THE MAGAZINES.

*Current Literature* for July is full of good things. Its departments and readings cover a very wide field. Of the departments, Gossip of Authors and Writers, The Sketch Book, Pen Pictures, and Brief Comment, are especially good. The readings and selections are made with admirable care and taste. In fiction there is "The Incarnation of Khaled", "Dining with Colonel Carter", "The Victory of the Scarlet", and "Revelation of Genius". Departments of verse, grave and gay, lively and severe, alternate with the prose.

IN *The Week* of July 24th we notice an article by Hon. J. W. Longley on "Public Opinion", and a Rondeau, by Mr. W. P. Dole, of St John. Original contributions in the issue of July 31st are "Farmers and Finance" (William Trant), "A Story of Three as to the desire of the people of England for closer trade relations