

The prohibitionists are, we fear, too far making a political question of the Scott Act. The question with politicians of both sides seems to resolve itself into just so much political capital, and each party seems anxious to grasp or reject it simply and solely to that end. The spirit of the Act, either for the good or the evil of the state or individual, never seems to cross the political mind. Financiers say that the Scott Act will be ruinous to Canada; that it will take a certain amount out of the general treasury cannot be denied, and that that certain amount will have to be made up out of taxation there is just as little doubt. That some people will use and some will abuse alcohol under any circumstances. However, that prohibition will increase the individual and general happiness of this Dominion, as well as the personal prosperity of its people no prejudiced person can deny.

A great deal of talk has been going on lately about the Congo Conference, and it may not be out of place for TRUTH to tell some of its readers what it all means. Stanley first thoroughly explored the valley of the Upper Congo and established a route. He was then, as representative of the Belgian Geographical Society, together with M. de Brazza, acting for the French Government, commissioned to examine the country more minutely, which he did and established trading stations along the river; so forming the country of the Upper Congo into a Franco-Belgian territory. Now steps in Portugal and claims the country by right of ancient discovery and occupation. Other European powers decline to recognize her claim, and on various pretexts of treaties with the native princes, and explorations, put in claims for themselves. The upshot is that a conference was thereupon called to consider these various claims, and the result is that a kind of independent state or colony has been formed on the Upper Congo under the joint protection of all the powers. A railway is already projected, and as the country is very fertile and exceedingly productive it will be a boon to the civilized world as well as to uncivilized Africa. In the year 1878 the writer visited the then explored country of the Congo, and found it, to him at least and his comrades, quite salubrious.

The new bill introduced lately into the United States Senate will go far to promote a more friendly feeling towards that country from Englishmen; the surprising part is that such action has been so long delayed. There is no doubt that dynamite and other powerful explosives are extensively manufactured in the United States, and that the purpose for which it is manufactured is perfectly known to the authorities, and to a great extent winked at.

President Cleveland has at this moment lying before him more petitions and applications for office, it is stated, than he could possibly enter into personally during his whole four years of office. There are about one hundred thousand officials regularly employed by the United States Government, and of this vast civil army no fewer than five or six thousand will be dismissed under the new reign. In the State of Kentucky alone there are thirty-six thousand applicants for government employment out of a total population, men, women and children, of one million three hundred and twenty-one thousand; or, in other words, about one man in every fifty desires a government birth.

Amongst of this army of Government officials in the United States, it may be stated that there are not two hundred of this one hundred thousand men and women who

hold their appointments through family interest, while in England, where the civil service alone outnumbered this, there are not one hundred who do not count on underhand interest of some kind, while all, or nearly all, the best and "fastest" places are held by impecunious scions or connections of the nobility and aristocracy—too proud to beg and too lazy to work.

It is nearly a quarter of a century since the Democrats were in power, and they are now naturally hungry for office, but to make a sweeping change at present would not be politic in Cleveland, and he seems to have no intention of doing so. His election, if not secured by the independent Republican party, was at least greatly aided by it.

The greater part of the Canadian contingent now serving in Egypt will shortly return home. Early in February they will leave Alexandria for England, en route to Halifax. About seventy-five of them have re-enlisted and will go on with General Eafles' division to Khartoum. The Canadians have done good service in Egypt, notwithstanding that not more than half of their number were experienced boatmen. There is, however, a sad side to the adventure. There have been nearly a dozen deaths from drowning, and other causes, and some of these poor fellows leave desolate wives and little children to mourn and bitterly feel their loss.

A piece of amusing news comes from Ireland in the shape of a telegram to the effect that the Lord Mayor's horses of Dublin refused to enter the castle yard the other day, and that his lordship had to make use of the Lord Lieutenant's carriage. It is feared that the coachman, who is known to be a Fenian, has administered the oath to the horses and that they are quite disaffected.

There is at present in the minds of many English, and in their hearts, a gross spirit of retaliation against all Irishmen, women and children, and hundreds of letters are being received by the English press, urging the cruellest measures against all creeds, classes and ages and against both sexes of the Irish. Thousands of good and loyal workmen have been discharged for no other reason than that they are Irish, and persecution of every description is rife throughout England against any who are so unhappily placed as to be in any way in the power of this class. There are hundreds of thousands of pure and loyal Irish who suffer degradation at the hands of these indiscriminate, would-be avengers, and these loyal and law-abiding subjects, persecuted by the country and the Government they would serve, are thrown over, and, by the force of circumstances, compelled to loath and despise such illiberal bigots. We almost fear that Earl Dufferin and Lord Walsley, as well as our own good Governor-General, Lord Lansdowne, (all Irishmen), would run a fair chance of rough handling by these bull-dog gentlemen were they in power.

The Queen's "Royal baron" of beef was last Christmas cut from a short-horn of Her Majesty's own breeding, and weighed over three hundred pounds. This large joint is always roasted at Windsor Castle, and on Christmas eve it is dispatched to Osborne, where it is placed in the centre of the side-board in the Queen's dining-room, flanked on one side by a woodcock pie, and on the other by a boar's head—a genuine *à la d'Anglais*, of which Her Majesty receives several at Christmas from her relations in Germany, as well as other national dainties of the Fatherland.

The following letter from a Belfast merchant to the *Morning News*, is a worthy example, and deserves to be reprinted in every journal throughout the land: "SIR,—Numerous inquiries having been made as to my reasons for withdrawing the sale of wines, brandy and spirits advertised to be held at my salerooms on the 18th and 19th instants, they are as follows:—After advertising, and on reflection, I came to the conclusion I could not conscientiously sell this class of goods, believing as I do, that the traffic in these drinks is causing three-fourths of all the pauperism, lunacy, and crime which the people of this kingdom are subject to, and suffering from, and which is gradually reducing their energy, vigor, health, and wealth. Though I lose both commission and advertising for above motives, I have absolutely withdrawn the sale. —James McCann." If some of our Canadian wine and spirit merchants would follow Mr. McCann's example they would receive many a sincere and hearty prayer.

The subject of whether roller skating is hurtful to girls and young people in general is freely discussed in the newspapers just now, and deserves a more impartial consideration than, for so far, it has received. Medical men differ greatly in their opinions regarding it. Some say that the exercise is healthy, and others that it is not of the right kind, and is injurious, while moralists endeavor to taboo it altogether. There is only one thing certain about the whole subject, and that is that the girls and boys will attend skating rinks of both kinds, say what we may.

The financial difficulties of General Grant, and his action in connection with Vanderbilt's proposals, are subjects of much editorial comment in the English papers. The *Liverpool Post* says: "From fighting the enemy of his country, he has turned to fight the Wall-street beasts. Napoleon watching the sunset across the Atlantic was not half so painful a spectacle, or half so acute a sufferer, as Grant receiving the banners and badges of conquest from the hands of the money king."

It is stated in certain English newspapers that notwithstanding the hard times at present existing in England, Ireland, and Scotland, there is no noticeable increase of pauperism in the Old Country. The explanation is evident enough to people living in Canada and the United States. *All the paupers are sent out here.*

Pauperism is decidedly on the increase in Toronto; and why is this so? It is not difficult to find an answer. It is the old, old story of intemperance, recklessness and waste, of opportunities thrown away, and of good advice unheeded. And yet, notwithstanding the many examples of sin and misery, one has only to look around to see others following the same evil courses. Parents, it may be, have done their duty, have properly taught their children. They have given them good counsel and good examples, yet, in many instances, instead of appreciating and maturing that knowledge, they think they must do as they see others do, enjoy pleasure, if only for a season. In time, however, often when it is too late, they find out that to follow out the right way is easier and better, and brings the only true happiness. If young people would only realize that to them must sooner or later come the responsibilities which they owe to their country, they would strive to prepare themselves for the grave duties which sooner or later must devolve upon them. And then when that time does come they will find themselves looked up to with confidence and respect.

The temperature has been lower this winter at Toronto than it has been for the twelve previous years, and yet for so far the snow that has fallen has been comparatively little. Business men in the towns and cities, and farmers in the country, were complaining of the "dull times" and of the broken state of the roads owing to that absence, but now that the snow has come at last matters do not seem to be in a much better condition from a business point of view; the city is certainly somewhat more lively and there is a little more general traffic, but on the whole money seems to be just as scarce as ever. Many blame the farmers, and say that they are at fault in holding back the grain, and, on the other hand the farmers, retort by saying that the prices now offered for grain are simply ruinous and that they can themselves hold it back for better prices as well as the wholesale grain merchants can.

A scheme has been launched for the formation of a land farming company in the North of Scotland. The nominal capital is to be \$50,000. The object of the company is to undertake the farming of about one thousand acres of land on the Haulker estate of the Earl of Kintore. Entry to the land will be at Whit Sunday, 1885, and it is proposed that the chief employees, farm managers, grieves and cattlemen, as a stimulus to exertion of skill and carefulness on their part, shall have half the surplus profits divided among them after payment of a dividend of four per cent. to shareholders.

The new rotation of time adopted by the International Meridian Conference with a view of putting an end forever to the necessity for using a.m. and p.m., was thought by many to be as impracticable and was novel, and they were of opinion that at least in the present generation it would be necessary to remind one's family of being twenty-five minutes past twenty-three o'clock, and consequently time for bed, if they intended to go at all, instead of a much past eleven p.m. But the change is already upon us, and there is no doubt that in many ways it will prove of value in keeping correct records of time, especially in meteorological registrations.

The London (England) *Times* states that in every foreign war office detailed plans for attacking England, if it should become desirable to attack her at all, have long ago been considered, and perhaps perfected.

We speak of the distance of the earth from the sun in a common-place everyday manner, calculated to diminish or blunt our conception of the vast distance between us and that luminary. As to the distance of 93,000,000 miles, a cannon ball would travel it in about fifteen years. It may help us to remember that, at the speed attained by the limited mail express on our railroads, a train which had left the sun for the earth when the Mayflower sailed from Deltaven with the Pilgrim Fathers, and which ran at that rate day and night would in 1885 still be a journey of some years away from its terrestrial station. The fare, at the customary rates, it may be remarked would be rather over 2,500,000 dollars so that it is clear that we should need both money and leisure for the journey. Perhaps the most striking illustration of the sun's distance is given by expressing it in terms of what the physiologists would call velocity of nerve transmission. It has been found that sensation is not absolutely instantaneous but that it occupies a very minute time in travelling along the nerve. So that if a child puts its finger into the candle, there is a certain, almost inconceivably

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