

THE long suspense as to the Librarianship at Ottawa has been terminated, very agreeably to the literary world, by the appointment of Mr. Martin Griffin, of the *Mail*, who has all the qualifications for the office, including a pleasant manner, which to strangers using a library is a point of no small importance.

THE last annual report of the *Globe* Printing Company shows that the fruits of two years of management by Mr. John Cameron have been good. The financial situation, which when Mr. Cameron took the control was almost desperate, has been retrieved: a floating debt of \$58,000 has been wiped out, and a substantial sum carried to the reserve. The circulation has increased. Another improvement is that from the Weekly Edition party virus has been in great measure excluded, and that issue has been made good and wholesome reading for the people.

HENRY IRVING, in comparing English and American theatrical audiences, laid especial emphasis upon the manner in which the latter usually manifest their disapproval of a given performance—not by hissing or audible criticism, but by quietly withdrawing or absenting themselves. Managers, who to be successful must “keep touch” of the public, readily note these things, and make their engagements accordingly. On previous occasions regret has been expressed in this column that the number of first-class dramatic and operatic companies visiting Toronto is limited; but the fact has always been recognized that the fault lies with amusement-seekers, not with the management. Mr. Sheppard’s experience—and it is unfortunately not singular—is that, outside of phenomenal and very occasional instances, such as the visit of the Irving Company, legitimate drama and high opera do not pay. Playgoers, if they do not actually manifest disapproval with Shakespearian performances, for instance, “absent themselves,” which amounts to pretty much the same thing from a managerial standpoint. A comparison of the “houses” which attended the performances in the Grand Opera House last week and this will sufficiently illustrate the point. “In the Ranks” can hardly, of course, be put forward as a sample of “legitimate drama,” but it is intelligent in construction, clean in sentiment, and infinitely above the average “show,” whilst the *mise en scene* of Mr. Buckley’s company was almost perfect. Yet what was the result—miserable houses, while the inane exhibition of semi-nude females which occupies the boards this week is attracting crowds.

THERE were thirty-eight failures in Canada reported to Bradstreet’s during the past week, against forty-six in the preceding week, and forty-three, thirty-four and six, in the corresponding weeks of 1884, 1883 and 1882 respectively. In the United States there were two hundred and twenty failures during the week, as compared with two hundred and seventy in the preceding week, and with two hundred and eleven, two hundred and eight and one hundred and seventy-seven in the corresponding weeks of 1884, 1883 and 1882. About eighty-eight per cent. were those of small traders, whose capital was less than \$5,000.

“WHAT has become of Forbes?” is a question that has been repeatedly prompted by accounts of the slaying of newspaper correspondents in the Soudan campaign. Mr. Archibald Forbes was asked by the *Daily News* to go to Suakim. He was ready to go, but his medical attendant absolutely forbade the enterprise. Mr. Forbes is suffering for his many adventures from a very weak heart, and is bound to rest at a time when he would be most anxious to use his services.

No apology, it is hoped, is necessary for the following liberal extract from the *Liverpool Mercury*—one of the highest authorities upon commercial matters in England:—

Upon various occasions we have called attention to the decrease of the volume of trade of Canada, and as the question of the disastrous results of the protective system which was introduced into the Dominion some six years ago by Sir John Macdonald is beginning to agitate the country, it may not be uninteresting if we now give a general outline of the figures we have placed before our readers. First, with regard to the shipping trade, we find that the tonnage of vessels entered inwards at Quebec in 1884 was 646,365 tons, which was no less than 139,407 below the tonnage for 1883. The vessels outwards also suffered a diminution of 115,630 tons. The tonnage for New Brunswick amounted to 309,399 in 1884, showing a decrease of 7,653 tons on the previous year. At the port of St. John the tonnage in 1884 was 249,363, a decrease of 4,326. In 1879 the tonnage at this port stood at 281,178, which was the largest amount ever reached; but since that year it has steadily declined. The number of new vessels registered at this same port also exhibits a large diminution. . . . With regard to the lumber trade of St. John, the shipments for the year show a falling off of very nearly 20,000,000 superficial feet as compared with 1883. These shipments gave employment to 225 vessels, representing a tonnage of 187,308 tons—a decrease of 45 vessels and 18,003 tons compared with 1883. Then, again, with regard to the industries of Canada, it appears that the workshops and factories employ between 6,000 and 7,000 less hands than they did formerly, and wages have gone down from 10 to 20 per cent. Among the industries in which the depression is greatest are the foundries and machine shops, many of which establishments have been entirely closed. As measuring the extent of the depression in trade in Canada, it may be mentioned that the United States Customs returns for December showed that out of 13,622 emigrants who arrived in that country 2,070 were from Canada. This was the greatest number of any one country, except Germany, which sent 3,650, England and Wales only sending 2,013. Then, again, the increase in the population of Canada is far below the reasonable calculations of those who were some years ago watching the natural growth of the country. In 1851 the percentage of growth of the population was 95, while in 1881, which is the last year for which we have returns, it was only 17·14 per cent. Compare with this that the increase of the Australian Colonies during the last ten years has been 54·50 per cent., and the United States 30·08 per cent., and it will be seen that Canada can in no way be regarded as a prosperous country. Taking the figures we have

given in their aggregate significance they show that Protection has absolutely failed in Canada, and honest Liberal statesmen there should make an effort to free their country from its trammels. Let Canada be warned by the example of the United States, which has practically protected its shipping off the face of the ocean. . . . We are glad to find from the Canadian newspapers that this matter of blocking the wheels of commerce is being heartily taken up by some of the leading Liberals in the Dominion, and we can only wish them every success. It is against all the laws of fiscal economy for a new colony to hamper its trade with restrictive duties, and not until these are swept away will Canada return to its former prosperous condition.

A “FIFTH PARTY” is in process of formation in England. It calls itself the “National Independent Party.” At present it is under the leadership of Major Warren, who has hitherto “loomed largely in the public eye.” He has formed a society and issued a programme. He is a monarchist, but would force the Sovereign to reside in Ireland for a portion of the year; is a reformer, but opposed to “extreme party antagonistical measures” (“antagonistical” is a good word); is in favour of free trade in food and fair trade in other matters; is opposed to the granting of Government contracts abroad, would increase the fleet, ally England with America for the resistance of invasion, and would be firm, consistent and honourable in his foreign policy. He talks of setting up candidates for vacant seats. But it is hardly likely that anybody will seek to give up party ties for the sake of coming under the chieftainship of Major Warren. Liberals will prefer Lord Salisbury, and Conservatives Mr. Gladstone, to Major Warren.

A SERIOUS difference appears to have arisen in the Women’s Suffrage Camp in England. It is not merely a divergency of opinion as to the method by which the promoters of the movement propose to attain the objects they have in view, but a difference as to what those objects really are. Mr. Woodall’s bill, which has what is described as the “official support of the party,” simply provided for the extension of the suffrage to “duly-qualified women,” that is to say, widows and spinsters duly qualified, to the exclusion of their sisters who have entered the marriage state. Some of the more prominent supporters of the movement are entirely opposed to this limitation. Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy and Mrs. Jacob Bright, for instance, claim the suffrage for all women possessing the necessary qualification, without any bar on the score of marriage. Miss Becker, on the other hand, supports the bill as a measure constructed on the old lines, and points out that no proposal has ever been made to Parliament to enable wives to vote. Meanwhile what is to become of Mr. Woodall’s bill if those who were supposed to approve now pass judgment upon it in terms of such vigorous condemnation?

EARLY in the present century a pamphlet was published entitled “A New Method of Conveying Letters and Goods by Air.” The writer was laughed at as a visionary, and in his lifetime nothing was done to test the practicability of his scheme. Time, however, has shown the soundness of his ideas, and there are now extensive pneumatic services both in London and Paris in connection with the postal and telegraphic departments. Familiar as Londoners are with underground railways, and much as they hear about gas and water pipes, and sewers, few of them probably are aware of the number and usefulness of the little galleries through which, a few inches beneath their feet, some 30,000 messages a day are conveyed by atmospheric pressure—that is, are blown from one point to another. These are, of course, written messages, and it is rather a surprising fact that a greater number of communications are dealt with in this way, within the London radius, than are conveyed by the telegraph wires. In anticipation of the increased business which the sixpenny inland telegrams—to be introduced next August—will probably induce, the authorities of St. Martins-le-Grand are carrying out an important extension of the pneumatic despatch system in London. As will easily be understood, the speed attained in this form of transmitting messages is not great, especially when the distances are long. The currents of air which rush through the pneumatic tubes, forcing along the “carriers” in which are placed the messages, although produced by immensely-powerful engines, are not effective for more than a comparatively short distance, after which they rapidly fail. The speed of the “carriers” decreases in a much greater ratio than that of the increase in distance, from which it is evident that the usefulness of the system is confined to a very limited area. But within certain limits it is eminently successful, and a most useful auxiliary to the telegraph service. We may look for a rapid extension of its use in populous places.

THE hazardous venture of establishing a new London morning daily paper is about to be attempted. The title chosen is the *Morning Mail*, and March 1 was fixed as the date of its first appearance. As the *Day* and the *Hour* at a penny failed to gain an established position in the list of metropolitan daily journals, it will be interesting to see if the new democratic halfpenny attracts a sufficiently wide constituency to enable it to live.

PROFESSOR Max Müller has been tilting with Messrs. Remington, regarding the accuracy of statements made in the “Memoirs of Caroline Bauer.” Her husband now comes to the front to defend her memory against what he calls the insulting and libellous charges made by the learned professor. This is what Caroline Bauer’s husband says about the matter:—“The memoirs in question were published in opposition to the will of the deceased, expressed shortly before her death, as well as of her husband and family; for she had lost all confidence in Arnold Wellmer, the editor of her works, who subsequently abused this confidence in such an unworthy manner. And as for these memoirs themselves, only brief memoranda