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THE SITUATION.

France shows a singular jealousy at the British occupation of Egypt. England was left to do alone the work of Europe which had to be done in Egypt, France merely looking on with folded arms and buttoned pockets. The occupation was never intended to be permanent, and the only question which there ever was, related to the time when the objects of the occupation will be considered as secured. For the departure of England, the Porte is said to be anxious, and it is not unnatural that this should be so. France and Russia can both play on the susceptibilities of the Porte, in urging evacuation, and can do so with some hope of success. France desires to have the date of the evacuation fixed. England is said to have resolved to reduce her force in Egypt to 4,000 men, and to keep none stationed north of Cairo. There is apparently an understanding between France and Russia, which extends beyond the Egyptian question. The more or less menacing attitude of France is causing Germany largely to increase its army, and Russia is seen to be a possible if not a certain ally of France. Whether or not these preparations foreshadow war, they are very costly and add seriously to the burthens of the governments concerned.

From endorsement of the anti-rent campaign of the Irish agitators, Mr. Gladstone recoils. In a letter to Mr. Cameron, M.P. for Glasgow, he expressed disapproval of it. And the action of the courts is likely to bring it to a speedy and inglorious end. The legality of the intervention of the agitators, as trustees, to receive the rents, will be tested. Meanwhile, one of the best accredited of the Nationalists has pronounced the word of separation, the attempt to achieve which would be open civil war. Concealed civil war has in fact long existed; and in this form the evil is harder to deal with than it would be if the warfare were open and avowed. An open contest would be of very short duration. Mr. Gladstone has said the first word in disapproval of his allies, but that word has not been heeded, and has not led to a change of policy or even of tactics.

Winter navigation, in places where it has hitherto been deemed impossible, is a problem which there is a disposition to regard as unsolved. The essays made in the Strait of Northumberland some ardent spirits refuse to regard as decisive. Col. Rhodes thinks there are conquests to be made over the rigors of winter, in the St. Lawrence river; and he instances what has been done in this respect in crossing among the ice, between Quebec and Point Levis, as an earnest of what can be done on a larger scale. He thinks an experiment should be made with a vessel which has been used in arctic navigation, such as the "Alert," one of which might be hired, for a reasonable sum, in the United States. This navigation would be child's play compared to navigation in the Arctic regions. Col. Rhodes is a firm believer in the possibility of navigating the St. Lawrence, in winter, the success of which he regards as certain. The experiments recently made of winter navigation among ice, in the north of Europe, supply an experience which may well encourage the hope of success here. The construction of railways renders this navigation of less importance than it would formerly have been, when no one ventured to think it possible. Still, it would have its uses; and it is worth while to go to the trouble of testing the possibility of winter navigation on our great river of the east. The tugs used to break ice and keep open channel at and near Montreal this month, have not proved suitable. The experiment is a failure.

Incredible as it would have sounded, a few years ago, even if put as a future possibility, the bringing of Douglas pine overland, from British Columbia to eastern Canada is a feat which has been accomplished. But why bring coals to Newcastle? Has eastern Canada not enough pine of its own? Yes, verily; but it has nothing, in point of size, comparable to the Douglas pine. Where sills of extra size are required this pine is exactly what is wanted. The demand, in the east, can scarcely be extensive, but the marvellous thing is that it can be supplied by rail, at a cost, we presume, which buyers are willing to pay. This carriage can scarcely fail to bring up an old railway problem, in a new form. The distance is enormous, and if freights be not minimized, the traffic would be impossible. The Douglas pine will find a more extensive market on the prairies of the eastern slope, and there, we apprehend, it will be possible to take it at moderate cost. Hauling timber through the Rocky Mountains is an arduous task, but it is at least certain that it can be done.

A difficulty between the White Star line and the British government about the carriage of mail matter has been temporarily got rid of, but it may re-appear. The Steamship company threatened to refuse to carry the mail matter, but reconsidered its determination under threat of a resort to the courts, made by the government, and took on board all the mails offered.

The success of M. Norquay in the Manitoba elections is an endorsement by the electorate of his financial arrangements

with the Dominion, which the Opposition condemned. It is a decided relief to find that, in this matter, we have touched bottom at last. M. Norquay defended the financial arrangement before the electorate, and it was made a distinct issue. We may therefore regard the settlement, which was very liberal to the province, as final and irrevocable. The attempt to disturb it savored of bad faith, and the people of the province have shown that they know how to protect their own honor. This aspect of the result is in every way gratifying.

Just when the failure of a Quebec builder marks the decay of wooden ship building in Canada, the announcement is made that Canada is to build her first steel steamer. This vessel is to have birth in the shipyard of the Rathbun Company, at Deseronto. She will be 250 feet long and 29 feet beam. She is expected to attain a speed of eighteen miles an hour, and will be owned by the Niagara Navigation Company.

The Labor Commission has at length been appointed. It contains a strong element of labor representation, but it cannot be said that it is strong in any other respect. However, additions to its numbers may yet be made. If the commission is to be of any value, employer of labor and the capital which sets it in motion should be represented.

A difficulty about supplying bait to the foreign rivals of Newfoundland fishermen has arisen. The legislature of the Island has passed a bill prohibiting the export of bait; and Lieutenant-Governor Voeux thought it his duty to reserve it for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure. But in his dispatch transmitting the bill, he is said to have advised against a veto; and Sir Ambrose Shea is in England, urging the acceptance of the bill. But the Imperial Government will first ascertain whether the measure is in any respect in conflict with the duties and obligations of Great Britain. Incidentally Canada is interested in this bill, the effect of which would be to lessen the rivalry which our fishermen have to meet.

Nearly two hundred millions of dollars represents the increase in clearances at thirty-two Clearing Houses in leading American cities last week. According to returns compiled by the Boston Post, the aggregate clearings were \$1,216,478,578, against \$1,025,880,168 last year; the gain is thus fifteen per cent. The clearings of thirty-one cities outside of New York show a gain of 18.5 per cent., which is greater than that of the previous week. The total is \$845,727,576, against \$804,769,657 last year. The gains are most evenly distributed, indicating a widespread improvement in trade.

One of those periodical commotions which shake the New York Stock Exchange, was felt on Wednesday. At the opening, the scene is said to have been one of the wildest ever witnessed even there. A great drop in the price of stocks had taken place, and brokers were frantic in their