

Mr. Gladstone's recent great speech, coming after the break-down of the *Times* case, and the Kennington election, cannot but produce a profound impression. When he comes to enumerate some of the indignities suffered by the Irish political prisoners—the plank-bed, the prison dress, the compulsory herding with felons, the cell cleaning, the production of those persons in convict dress as witnesses, and the cropping of hair, the people of England will have brought home to them more forcibly than ever the tremendous mistake of the policy Mr. Balfour is pursuing, certainly with a resoluteness worthy of a better cause.

A very special service both to the Province and to the memory of Haliburton has been rendered by Mr. Crofton in bringing to light the "Season Ticket," a work published anonymously in England, and until recently almost absolutely unknown in Nova Scotia. This book is especially remarkable for the—it might be said—prophetic foresight of the patriotic author and judge. Long years before the C. P. R. was dreamed of Haliburton sketched out what ought to be done, and precisely what has now become a grand and accomplished reality. We venture to suggest to the "Haliburton" a re-publication of "The Season Ticket."

Senator Macdonald in a recent speech in the Senate on the trade relations of Canada expresses little hope of any extensive trade being built up with our fellow colonists at the antipodes. He considers that comparative distance is an essential criterion of the value to us of the world's markets, and thinks that interposed between us and Australia too wide to be overcome. Senator Macdonald's opinions are entitled to much consideration, but we are not sure that the obstacle he fears is quite as formidable as it appears to him. From Vancouver to Sydney or New Zealand is, no doubt, a long stretch, but not we fancy so long as to be at all a serious obstacle to a steady trade.

An article has been brought to our notice which appeared in the *Nova Scotian* of the 18th February, 1867. It is quoted by that journal from the *Imperial Review*, and is so interesting that we have thought it worth reproducing. One noteworthy point in considering the amount of attention the idea of Imperial Federation commanded a quarter of a century ago, is the urgency of initiating some such measure which then impressed itself so forcibly on some of the best statesmen of the day. Conditions may appear to be even more urgent to-day. Yet it is not improbable that we may go on in our present relations for some years more without disturbance, and with the advantage of increasing wealth and strength to the Dominion.

Utilitarian ideas have made such headway in England as to menace the peaceful supremacy of the classics in the Universities, and a pronounced demand has arisen for University training which shall fit men for the struggle of existence. It is an instance of the effect of a special study to influence the judgment that Prof. Max Muller has ranged himself on the side of the classicists, and maintains that the primary work of a university is to preserve the ideas and culture of the ancient civilizations and literature, and by explaining their true relations to modern philosophy, pass them on unimpaird to future generations. The voice of Max Muller carries with it a certain weight, and no doubt there is a distinct value in the reasonable conversation of the classics, but his attachment to philology prevents his discerning the fact that their influence is continuously and inevitably receding into the past, displaced by the growing exigencies of modern practical life.

The passage through Congress of the Bill incorporating the Nicaragua Maritime Canal Company is a matter of no little importance to Canada. The difference in distance between Halifax and St. John, and Boston and New York is insignificant, and many thousands of miles would be saved over the Cape Horn route in ocean voyages between American and European Atlantic ports, and all ports on the Pacific, China, Japan, India, the Hawaiian Islands, Australia and New Zealand. It can scarcely be doubted that the Nicaraguan Canal will lend an impetus to the Hennepin Canal scheme to connect Lake Michigan with the Mississippi River. If this water-way were completed on, as will doubtless be the case, an adequate scale, our western products could be loaded on to vessels at the wharves in Toronto or any other of our lake ports, and not handled until destination had been reached in China, Japan, India, Australia, etc. It could scarcely be but that such a saving in distance and of the cost of travel would have an immense effect on the expansion of the foreign trade of Canada.

The detached items of intelligence concerning the curious Cossack expedition to Abyssinia were so meagre that it took some time to form a definite idea about it, and even now, when we have something like a history of it, its real purpose is by no means clear. Captain Atchinoff was the leader or "Hetman" of a band of South Cossacks, who left Russia with a view of penetrating Abyssinia, ostensibly to spread the doctrines of the Greek Church among the Abyssinian Christians, but his purposes seem to have been a good deal mixed, and his procedure questionable. Atchinoff landed it seems on French territory, and took possession of an old fort at Sagalla. He had with him 145 men, women and children, and several "popes" or priests. The Russian Government was asked by France if it had any responsibility for Atchinoff, which M. de Giers entirely disclaimed. The French Governor of Abock then summoned him to submit or disappear. Atchinoff did neither and rejected an ultimatum. The French Admiral opened fire, killing, according to the Russian account, five, and wounding five more. The party then surrendered, and was sent back, via Suez to Odessa. The whole affair is so singular that it is, after all, quite possible it may have been undertaken simply from religious fanaticism.

It is evident that Mr. Chamberlain has a comprehension of the political situation in England denied to his conservative allies. He has recently written a letter in which he intimates that it is time for the government to put forth a scheme for allaying the discontent in Ireland. As we have said before, had Lord Beaconsfield been still alive he would assuredly have taken the wind out of Mr. Gladstone's sails by a proposition of his own, as he did on a previous occasion in himself initiating an extension of the franchise. But Lord Salisbury has three great faults as a leader—want of foresight, hastiness of temper, and the inexpedient pride which is opposed to concession. It is safe to predict the return to power of Mr. Gladstone at the next general election. If the Government majority were not so strong its downfall might come earlier.

The remarks of Sir Frederick Middleton, at the Dominion Rifle Association, and the reports of one or two of the D. A. G.'s, have raised considerable discussion as to the benefit to the rank and file of the present system of Rifle competitions. Among others, a letter to the *Militia Gazette* has been elicited apparently from Halifax, on which we shall have some comment to make later on. Another is from the well-known correspondent of more than one paper, "Bayonet," whose communications always carry some weight. This gentleman furnishes some tabulated statistics, and states the average number of corporals and privates in the Wimbledon teams for seventeen years past to have been three, compared to 14 (sic.) of all other ranks and arms of the force. We believe the proportion of officers and Staff sergeants in the team this year will be as large as in any year, but we have not yet seen the list.

One of the main points of the anti-Jesuit Agitation is the assumption that placing the grant at the disposal of the Pope is an infringement on the sovereignty of the Queen. This point, however, seems somewhat strained. By the rules of the Catholic Church none of the orders can hold property, but only the church itself, i.e., the Pope. The Pontiff therefore stands in the relation of the sole representative of Jesuit rights whatever they may be. It would seem, therefore, that there is no real abdication of sovereignty by a Government in dealing with a creditor whom it admits to have a moral claim and who happens to be a foreigner. Had the "alleged, and (rightly or wrongly) conceded claim," says a writer in the *Week*, "been that of a commercial company whose official head was a foreigner, there would have been no constitutional objection to treating with him in the same way," and the creditor is the one to dispose of a sum paid him in quitance of a claim. There is, in reality, no question of authorizing the Pope to legislate for Canadians, or of subjecting Canadians to his legislation, nor was the Pope dealt with as a "foreign power," but simply as the head of the Catholic Church.

No point of departure for the series proposed to be issued by the "Haliburton" could have been so appropriate as the admirable monograph for which we are indebted to Mr. F. Blake Crofton. It is only 72 pages in length, but that brief space embodies with great lucidity an immense amount of labor and study. We will venture to predict that Haliburton will be better known to his countrymen thro' the perspicuous medium of Mr. Crofton's labor of love than he has ever yet been. A reader of the original works has to exercise his own powers of thought to extract from "Sam Slick" the full weight and bearing of the clockmaker's homely words of wisdom, but in Mr. Crofton's brochure many of them are indicated, brought out, and impressed upon the mind in connection with the points to which they refer in a manner calculated to create a permanent impression. Besides what is actually given, the pamphlet is further a guide and index to a vast number of passages of value which Mr. Crofton's space would not, of course, allow him to transcribe. In addition the critical remarks are fully up to the mark of what might be expected from Mr. Crofton's masterly ability in that line. "Haliburton: The man and the writer" ought to command an immense sale throughout the Maritime Provinces.

The rejection by the Local House of the amendment to the Municipal Assessment Act giving to Dominion officials the right to vote and be candidates for office at Municipal elections by a majority of one, is it seems to us decidedly a party move and one that speaks poorly for the statesmanship and breadth of some of our legislators. Part of the majority were evidently moved by feelings of intense partizanship, and allowed their judgment to be obscured thereby. They ignored the probability that a Liberal Government may some day hold the reins of power at Ottawa, and that their present action, which is aimed at their political opponents, may in the future react against themselves. History proves over and over again that legislation for purely political purposes generally reacts in this way, especially where as in this case, the sacred rights (as they have well been termed) of individuals are ignored. As a rule it will be found that both Dominion and Local officials are mentally and socially fully on a par with the average voter. In many cases talents of a high order have secured their appointments, and in the communities in which they reside they are respected as honorable high minded men. Is the fact of their being Dominion officials such a heinous offence, than that they are to be placed under the same disabilities in the exercise of the franchise as felons and imbeciles? And yet this is virtually the decision arrived at by the majority of the Local House. We should like to witness the effect produced upon even the most frothy of the opponents of extending the municipal franchise to Dominion officials by the offer of a good fat office under the much hated Dominion. Of course it would be scornfully rejected (?) So far the large Liberal majority have exercised their power with wisdom and moderation, and have enacted many laws that will rebound to their credit. It seems a pity then that so clean a record should be blotted by the spirit of rank partizanship which led to the rejection of a measure which meted out simple justice to Dominion office holders.