

Notes of the Week.

We inadvertently referred to the closing of the session of the Imperial Parliament in our last, which however did not occur until Saturday. The Queen's speech is interesting and declares that England's relations with other powers is of the most cordial kind. It gives warm praise to the English Egyptian forces, and thankfully recognizes the value of the English victories in preventing further and greater disturbances in the East. An unusual and unexpected reference is made to the subject of the sale and use of intoxicants, which leads us to hope that in the near future it will be a prominent national question before Parliament. Reference is also made to Ireland and it states that a great social improvement is noticeable in that country, while regretting the distress which exists in some portions of it. The House was prorogued to meet again February 15th next. The adoption of the "closure" will enable future sessions to transact much more business than Parliament has of late been able to do, and many questions of importance will come before it after the holidays.

It is rather amusing, although not a help to the settlement of the affairs of the country, to learn that the Egyptians do not believe that England has been successful in the recent war. They have had only the reports which have appeared in the Arabic papers and the statements of unprincipled and designing emissaries of the Mosque, all of which are not calculated to convey much truth to the people. The general impression in the country, so a recent English writer who has acquainted himself with the facts says, is altogether to the effect that Arabi was the victor and the English the vanquished until, by command of the Sultan, Arabi permitted our troops to occupy Cairo. They say that as the Bedouins who performed the outpost service of the Egyptian army had to be paid before they could be got rid of the English general paid them £100,000 to go away. But they declare that since the war the English acted very treacherously, and the Sultan has decided to send a mighty army to drive them into the Nile.

The trial, such as it was, of Arabi Pasha has ended, the prisoner on Saturday morning having pleaded guilty to the charge of rebellion. In the afternoon the court reassembled and pronounced sentence of death against him. The Khedive subsequently commuted the sentence to exile for life. It is believed Arabi will retire to some part of the British dominions, and it is to be hoped that such care will be taken of him by England that he will never be in a position to cause further mischief in his own country. His fate may have been in some respects a hard one, but few will deny that he is a dangerous man, and that it was owing to him that England was forced to sacrifice blood and money in quelling what otherwise would have proved a rebellion seriously affecting the peace of Europe. England having no doubt gained unexpected advantages by the war can afford to be generous with her prisoner.

We are glad to learn that the Dominion Government have followed the recent action of the United States authorities, and adopted the "return" postal cards which have already proved a great boon to our neighbours. They are now being prepared and will soon be issued. This new feature has much to commend it and will at once, we feel sure, be recognized by all classes as a great public convenience.

Every little while the writers for our daily papers alarm their unsophisticated readers by the announcement of some terrible disaster to Christianity. If an eccentric minister of some obscure body seeks for popularity by denying the truth of revelation, or by ridiculing some doctrine precious to the Christian, it is heralded forth as an evidence of the change that is taking place in the Christian world and a proof of the great upheaval going on around us. Recently the remarkably clever but strangely erratic Plymouth preacher, Henry Ward Beecher, whose popularity seemed waning, bid for a renewal of it by some more or less wild and reckless expression of his belief or want of belief, and the secular papers parade the statement with

heavy head-lines, and utter solemn regrets at the evidence of the change in public sentiment; and more recently a Mr. Bray, of Montreal, an imitator of the worst features of Beecher and others of the same stamp, thinking to gain a little notoriety, has made what the papers call a formal declaration of his belief, declaring himself to be a Unitarian. The papers, no doubt, are glad to get material to fill their pages, and these transactions are gladly welcomed, but it is unfortunate that their startling head-lines and grave accounts of the doings of these persons, whose peculiarities are so well known in their own localities, should perhaps cause alarm in weak and unstable minds, and so really do a harm to individuals who need encouragement. We do not suppose our brethren of the pen will heed any advice upon the subject from us, but it would be well if they were not so anxious after sensationalism, and when giving the news of the kind referred to confined themselves to a statement of facts and kept their headlines and elaborate articles for other purposes.

A very important decision has been given by Judge Peters of Charlottetown in connection with the failure of the Island Bank. He ruled that a shareholder can when a call is made upon him for his double liability under the Charter, set off against it any amount which the Bank at the time of its failure owed to him. The result of this judgment is, that all shareholders will obtain payment of their debts or deposits in full in preference to other creditors of a bank who will only get whatever the dividend of the assets can pay. If this law is sustained by the Court of Appeals it will materially affect the position of depositors in banks, and will increase the distrust of small banking institutions in the public mind.

The coming change of Government in the United States and the consequent clean sweep of officials of every grade from the highest to the lowest, which such a change invariably brings with it, is causing much discussion in the Republican papers respecting reforms in the Civil Service. There can be nothing said in favor of the present system, although it is rather late in the day for the Republican Party to take exception to it when they have been in power for twenty years and have largely made it what it is. But putting that aside the whole system is a bad one, educating thousands in the pernicious principle that to the victors belong the spoils, and encouraging dishonesty and fraudulent dealing in every department of the public service. Apart from partisan regrets there is a growing feeling among the very best men of the nation that the system puts a premium on corruption, and many of the papers are calling for a change. The first direction in which a change could be made with advantage would be the formation of a Cabinet which, like our Canadian Executive, shall be responsible directly to the people, and not as is now the practice, simply appointees and political friends of the President. We believe our neighbours must before long see the importance of such a change and will adopt it.

We have again an evidence of the very great danger of Trades' Unions when managed by unprincipled persons, to the business of a country, and even to the prosperity of a great and growing industry. In Montreal a strike is imminent among the employes of the boot and shoe factories, of whom there are nearly 12,000. And for what reason do our readers suppose? Because the men have been abused, or their wages reduced, or their hours of work made too long? Nothing of the sort, but because two non-union men were hired by a firm much in need of workmen to fill pressing orders. We sympathize with the working classes when they rise in their might and stand together to oppose oppression and unfair dealing, but no words can be too strong in condemnation of a system which seeks to tyrannize over the employer who, perhaps, has risked his all in a manufactory which a strike will cripple, if not altogether destroy.

A series of interesting experiments have recently taken place in the United States with an invention which seems destined to be of great practical usefulness. It is called a ship brake, and is to do for a ship what the brake does for a railway train—stop

it, only accomplishing its purpose in much shorter time. The invention consists of a pair of iron shutters or fins, the area of which is in direct ratio with the size of the ship, and hinged one on each side of the stern post. They shut close to the sides of the vessel, and are kept so by a simple apparatus on deck which is connected with the pilot-house. When the signal is given to "let go," the stays connected with the fins allows them to open at right angles and cause the stoppage of the vessel almost instantly. The invention bids fair to prove especially valuable in cases where there is danger of collision, and will, it is to be hoped, prevent the loss of life which has become so frequent and so large of late years. Many of the collisions reported show that the pilot had over five minutes' warning to allay the speed of his vessel and avert disaster, but was unable to do so in that space of time. The present contrivance is guaranteed to stop any vessel, no matter what size or rate of speed, inside of her own length at least.

The Canadian Pacific Railway Company having decided to increase their stock from \$25,000,000 to \$100,000,000 justifies us in coming to the conclusion that they have met with unexpected success, and are in public favour, and also that they contemplate entering more largely into business connected with their undertaking than was contemplated. It is plain now to any ordinary observer that so vast a work running through a country rapidly becoming cultivated and soon to embrace a population of millions, must necessarily lead to the acquisition by building or purchase of other lines as feeders both of steamboat and railway, and also to an enormous outlay for rolling stock and other necessary appendages. We may therefore congratulate our country on this important evidence of future growth and prosperity.

There has been in New York a revival of what was once an important political question.—What has become of Morgan? Morgan, some of our readers may be aware, was a Free Mason and it was said revealed the mysteries of the Order and was murdered by the brotherhood. Thurlow Weed, a well known journalist and politician, recently dead, left behind him some papers, including an affidavit, purporting to be the confessions of Morgan's murderers, but the whole story seems strangely absurd and unreliable, and is scarcely worthy of serious notice. Certainly Masons are among the most moral and religious in every community, and to ask us to suspect them now or at any time of any such crime is imposing upon our credulity. We don't believe that it is anything more than a poor attempt to revive a dead issue, and if possible catch votes. But anti-Masons of all kinds are as little affected by these attempts to arouse their prejudices as Protestants are to the no-Popery cries which ever and anon emanate from some seeker after political honours in the United States and Canada.

We are sorry to learn that the liquor dealers have been successful in gaining a victory over the law in Prince Edward Island. A number of convictions under the Scott Act having been appealed from, the appeals have been sustained owing to some technicalities. It is difficult to understand how, in the face of so much misery and crime, the positive results of drinking, Christian men can be found ready to encourage the licensing of "rum-shops" and other demoralizing places of public resort. What family has not suffered from the curse? What society has not been deprived by it of some of its brightest ornaments? What community has not been degraded and injured by the traffic? And yet the efforts of earnest men to stay the tide of intemperance and save the youth and manhood of the country, meets with the determined opposition not only of the rum-seller, but of many who are among the most respectable portion of every community. Oh that all Christians would arouse themselves to more determined action, and rid society of this great pest!

The foundering of the St. John, N. B., steamer "Cedar Grove," and the loss of five lives, including the captain and a young lady passenger, coming so quickly upon the recent sad catastrophe in Halifax and the railway accidents in New Brunswick, has cast a deep gloom over the people of both Provinces.