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It is an unhappy coincidence that, just when there seemed a possibility of France and England coming to a satisfactory settlement on the Newfoundland question, the Government of the Republic should have been offended by the Anglo-German agreement. Instead of serving as a precedent that might be cited as applicable to the French shore, the surrender of Heligoland only aggravates the supposed slight of the Zanzibar protectorate. Nor is that the only new point raised by the agreement. The French wish to have their sphere of influence on the African continent defined on a basis as favorable as the new settlement is, in their opinion, to England and Germany. M. Deloncle, who has constituted himself the champion of French interests in Africa, has been telling the world that it was France that first opened the interior; that it was France that sacrificed most men and spent most money there; that it was her missionaries who defied danger and endured hardships more than those of any other European country. Whatever becomes of the East Coast, he insists that the basins of Lake Tchad and the Niger must belong to France. "We ought," he says, "to be at home from Lake Tchad to the Egyptian frontier on the east, the Tripolitan frontier on the north, the Tunisian frontier, the Algerian frontier, and the Morocco frontier on the north-west. All the Sahara ought to belong to us. It is, strictly speaking, all the Touareg region included between South Morocco and Adrar on the west, and the Tripolitan Fez, Tibesti, and Borku on the east." M. Deloncle's protests and claims have not been fruitless, and for extent of sovereignty and suzerainty (as far as Europe has the right to grant it) France will not be greatly behind her rivals. The desert of Sahara will, of course, detract from its value; but, whether M. de Lesseps' inland sea be made an accomplished fact, or the great wilderness be traversed (as some propose) by railways, France seems determined to be mistress of the wild. But in seizing the desert she does not relax her hold on Newfoundland.

It is satisfactory to have the assurance that the harvest this year will be above the average both in yield and excellence. We have already given what may be considered a modest estimate of the North-Western wheat crop. Latest advices favour the opinion that the Manitoba crop is more likely to be over than under the 15,000,000 bushels of our previous forecast. The farmers of the prairie province may safely be congratulated on profits that will amply compensate them for their toil and anxiety. From Ontario the reports are, on the whole, most encouraging. Fall wheat has done remarkably well, and spring wheat better than the average in recent years. There are, as might be expected, complaints from less favoured localities, the rust having affected some crops. Fear of the McKinley tariff deterred some of the more far-seeing farmers from sowing the ordinary extent of barley. Last year the barley exported from Canada to the United States was

valued at \$7,721,000, so that it is vain to ignore the gravity to our farmers of the projected change. Those who look to the English market may, however, succeed with the two-rowed variety, of which a considerable quantity has been sown. The weather of the last week or so has not been without an element of danger, but we hope that the crops will have had vitality enough to pass through the ordeal unscathed.

Mr. Swinburne's latest production, "Russia: an Ode," written after reading the account of Russian Prisons in the *Fortnightly Review* for July, is not likely to further his candidacy for the Laureateship. Tennyson did, indeed, call the Czar Nicholas a "giant liar," but when "Maud" was written the Czar Nicholas was England's enemy. Besides, the relations between the royal family and the house of Romanoff were not as yet cemented by those marriages which make the younger members of both so near akin. When questioned on the subject in the House of Commons, Sir James Ferguson, representing Lord Salisbury, said that the Government could not undertake to be responsible for Mr. Swinburne's ravings—a reply which he could hardly have made if Mr. Swinburne had been an officer of Her Majesty's Household. To make him court poet now would be taken as a deliberate insult to the Czar.

It is not the first time, however, that the author of "Atalanta" has taunted the tyrants of the North. "The White Czar," written years before the assassination of Alexander II., has all the force to-day of a prophecy fulfilled. It appears that in 1877 an English magazine published a translation of some "insolent lines" addressed by a Russian poet to the Empress of India. This insult to his Queen stirred Mr. Swinburne's indignant loyalty, and he replied to it by a sonnet addressed to the Czar and beginning with these lines:

"Gehazi by the hue that chills thy cheek  
And Pilate by the hue that sears thine hand,  
Whence all earth's waters cannot wash the brand  
That signs thy soul a manslayer's though thou speak  
All Christ, with lips most murderous and most meek."

A supplementary sonnet contains a seeming forecast of the Czar's terrible fate:

"Call for clear water, wash thine hands, be clean,  
Cry, *What is truth?* O Pilate, thou shalt know  
Haply too soon, and gnash thy teeth for woe  
Ere the outer darkness take thee round unseen  
That hides the red ghosts of thy race obscene  
Bound nine times round with hell's most dolorous flow  
And in its pools thy crownless head lie low  
By his of Spain who dared an English queen."

In a few words of explanation touching these sonnets, Mr. Swinburne says: "The writer will scarcely be suspected of royalism or imperialism; but it seemed to him that an insult leveled by Muscovite lips at the ruler of England might perhaps be less unfitly than unofficially resented by an Englishman who was also a republican."

After he had gone over to the Church of Rome, the late Cardinal Newman liked to think that, even in his boyhood, and while under influences widely different from those which afterwards swayed him, his future course was foreshadowed by an incident, of which at the time he could not have understood the significance. "When I was at Littlemore," he writes in his *Apologia*, "I was looking over old copy-books of my school-days, and I found among them my first Latin verse-book; in the first page of it there was a device which almost took away my breath with surprise. I have the book before me now and have just been showing it to others. I have written on the first page, in my school-boy hand, 'John H. Newman, February 17, 1811, Verse-book'; then follow my first verses. Between 'Verse' and 'Book' I have drawn the figure of a cross upright, and next to it is what may indeed be meant for a necklace; but what I cannot make out to be anything else than a set of beads suspended, with a little cross attached. At this time I was not ten years old. I suppose I got the idea from some romance, or some religious picture; but the

strange thing is how, among the thousand objects which meet a boy's eyes, these in particular should so have fixed themselves in my mind that I made them thus practically my own." It was the rare candour of self-revelation of which this passage (which betrays a fatalism observed more frequently in men of action than in men of thought) is a striking instance, that won for Dr. Newman the esteem and, to a certain extent, even the sympathy of persons whose convictions diverged *toto calo* from his own.

But this candour, which is so charming when it concerns only his personal feelings, reflections and struggles, became a weapon by no means safe to wield when applied to the combats of polemics. For instance, in one part of his apocalypse, he confesses that he "came to the conclusion that there was no medium, in true philosophy, between Atheism and Catholicity, and that a perfectly consistent mind, under those circumstances in which it finds itself here below, must embrace either the one or the other." Having made his choice and his faith being (as he deemed and as his life proved) unshakable, he does not hesitate to enumerate the weak points—seeming self-contradictions and absurdities—the Bible itself, by way of showing that only the supreme authority of the Church can make it worthy of acceptance. Protestants, he argues, may consider the Fathers credulous and reject modern miracles, but do they find no difficulty in "the serpent that tempted Eve and the ass that admonished Balaam?" Dr. Newman must have forgotten that he was tempting many of his brethren, from whom he had separated himself and who were not likely to accept his admonitions to cruel doubt. At a later stage in his career he was equally outspoken in matters that concerned his fellow-believers. But he survived his protest twenty years, during more than half of which he held, with the goodwill of his beloved England and of universal Christendom, the exalted rank of a prince of the Church, while living the life of the humblest of disciples. Cardinal Newman (apart from his place in the record of 19th century literature) will live in history as one of the most interesting results of the conflicting forces of an age of transition. He felt by the intuition of his sensitive spiritual nature that sweeping changes were coming to pass, the tendency of which he distrusted, and as he dreaded compromise, he sought to fix his feet above the reach of its allurements.

Though Athabasca is the largest of the four Western Districts—comprising some 122,000 square miles—it has since its organization as yet attracted comparatively little notice. For this its situation is doubtless sufficient reason. The valleys of the Athabasca and Peace rivers are, however, by no means unknown. Years ago Dr. G. M. Dawson and Prof. Macoun, of the Geological Survey, explored and described this part of the North-West. The climate is mild enough and the summer long enough to ripen wheat, oats and barley and all the ordinary crops and vegetables. Specimens of grain raised in the Peace river valley were exhibited at Philadelphia in 1876. The Athabasca and the Peace unite to form the Great Slave river, which, after passing through the lake of that name, forms the Mackenzie, which, from its source in the Rockies, near Mount Brown, to its mouth in the Arctic Ocean, has a course of about 3,000 miles. It is, indeed, the longest river in the British dominions. The banks of the Mackenzie proper are mostly high and clothed with pines. Just above the Arctic circle it narrows into a gorge, known as the Ramparts, about ten miles long, and which, with its fantastic turret-like cliffs, seems to form a stupendous portal into the Arctic world." The basin of the Mackenzie is but sparsely inhabited by bands of wandering Indians, the dwellers in the Hudson's Bay posts and the self-denying occupants of the missionary stations. One of the posts, Fort Good Hope, is just at the Arctic circle. North of that latitude there are three posts—one on Peel river.