

sent developed, by the following letter of Mr DONALD MACKENZIE to the *Daily Telegraph*, of 9th April:

"Sir—In one of your leading articles you allude, in rather facetious terms to the practicability of the formation of the inland sea proposed to be made on the western portion of the Sahara. Though not actually condemning the scheme as the offspring of an imaginative mind, you clothe your remarks in such language as would lead most of your readers to believe that we are attempting an almost impossibility. If you will allow me to trespass upon your columns for a brief space I will put such facts before you as may perhaps induce you to think more favourably of the undertaking. In the first place, the waddy which is called in our maps the River Belta is ten miles wide, and its bed is considerably below the level of the Atlantic. Across the mouth of this waddy there is a sand ridge about thirty feet high and five miles broad. This we know is a fact from a survey by Captain Riley. Instead of the 'few years' spade work,' therefore, it would be a comparatively easy task to clear out a channel through this intervening ridge. Secondly, we do not intend the sea to go "washing away all obstructions," &c., since a similar entrance would be made as was done in the Suez Canal. How this is to be done would be premature for me to say at the present time. Our preliminary survey would determine this. Thirdly, the map constructed by Mr. H. F. Brian, instead of being a 'pretty, yet fallacious, piece of cartography,' is constructed from the highest authorities, and is the result of more than seven years' investigation. It is true that the heights are not proportionate to the horizontal measurements, since that would be impossible in a relief model; but if you would consult our large model, you would at once be convinced that the boundaries of the hollow are not so indefinite as you imagine. In place of the Saharan Desert being unbroken from the Nile to the Atlantic, there is a range of mountains, the Asbera, 5,000 feet high according to Dr. Barth—if he is any authority—which rise from a table-land stretching across from the Mediterranean Sea to Lake Chad. The expedition selecting the Gulf of Gabes as the starting point, hit upon one extremity of this tableland, so of course they failed. Lastly, the hollow of El Juff is totally uninhabited; caravans never cross it, but keep on the high lands surrounding it; and, though the destruction of the 'snakes, jackals, &c.' might be desirable, even such 'varmint' could not exist in a salt pit, and, since there are no trees, the inhabitants, even if there were any, would have but a poor chance of building Noah's arks. The expedition will make an accurate survey of the well defined boundaries of this huge depression to ascertain if any 'cracks' exist before the water is 'turned on,' so that Mr. Stanley need not keep in proximity to his rafts in dread of the impending deluge,—I am, Sir, faithfully yours."

Some of our readers as may be students of or amateurs in the "dismal science" will find food for cogitation in the following letter addressed to the Editor of the *Toronto Mail*:

"Sir,—Mr. Childers is reported to have said on his return to England, that 'the United States would have a population of 150,000,000 fifty years hence.'

"Mr. Childers's calculations were very

easily made. The Americans have told him that their population had doubled every twenty five years, which was correct previously to 1850. This decline comes in just where those knowing all the circumstances have long since predicted it would. The causes of this Mr. C. has not looked into. The population of the United States in 1850 was 23,256,000; in 1870, with an immigration of five or six millions, it was only 38,538,000. This gives an increase of sixty-five per cent. in twenty years, and at the rate of about eighty two per cent. in twenty five years. The Civil War is referred to as the exceptional cause of this decline. Only to a limited extent can I admit this. First, the enormous additions of territory have been one element in her past increase—Louisiana (embracing an immense territory), Florida, Texas, California, with vast Mexican provinces intervening, Maine, &c. The second and chief cause of the great increase of the population has been immigration. For the ten years ending in 1860 she received three millions of immigrants. Deducting the influx of foreign population into the States between 1860 and 1870 even, the increase by births was only eleven per cent. Should immigration fail, fifty years hence, at this rate of increase, would find her with a population of only about sixty millions. Her natural increase, that by births, is very low, not more than half that of Canada. And as the new-comers have much the largest families, the natural increase, as immigration declines, would be much less—the old American families having but few children. Nations living in similar climates in the old world do not double their populations in even one hundred years, and the Americans are not likely to do any better.

"The Republic, having reached the western limits of arable land, except portions on the Pacific, cannot look, in the future, to immigration as the chief source of her increase in population. She now, too, has a heavy national debt, and taxation has become oppressive. Nor is she likely to add any more foreign territory, and by this means swell her population. The probabilities are more the other way, in the direction of disintegration. Canada, at this critical epoch in the fortunes of the Republic, comes in as a rival. We have, by all odds, the best part of the continent yet remaining unoccupied. One half of the Republic is a hopeless desert, and the wave of an incoming people must now turn from the desert areas west of the Mississippi to the north-westward into the vast and fertile regions of British America.

"I am not, like Mr. Childers, a prophet, but have taken some pains during fifty years' residence on the American continent to make myself acquainted with the climates and resources of the Republic and of Canada. First, one-half of the population of the United States is made up of immigrants and their immediate descendants. Secondly, the money value of these immigrants, (not including, of course, their descendants), as estimated by the Bureau of Statistics at Washington, (\$1,000 per head), equalled, in 1860, one half the entire value of the property of the Republic as given in their census, and the money borrowed abroad, with the money brought by the immigrants, is also equal to one half the value of the real estate of the Republic given in her census of that year. In other words, what she has got from Europe—chiefly from England—amounts in value, if estimated in dollars, to the whole money worth of the United States in 1860—her farms, houses, railways, canals, ships, docks, &c. And I take the entire

valuation from their own census and statistics. The people of the United States are not so wealth producing as the English or Germans. They have lived, if not chiefly, certainly to a greater extent than any other nation, on what they have borrowed. Borrowing must some day end, and pay-day must come."

Yours,

April 23. 1875.

J. H.

The following paragraph taken from the official statistics of the United States strongly corroborates the views taken by J. H. of the political and financial position of that country, and shews conclusively the national development may be overdone:

"The aggregate debts of all the railways in the United States amounted on the 1st of January, 1875, to \$1,836,904,450, which is about half their cost. The payment of interest at 7 per cent. requires \$128,583,311, while the net earnings of the roads for 1874 amounted to \$183,810,562, leaving only \$53,227,251 for dividends after paying interest on debt. The railways in the South pay no dividends; those in the West pay a small percentage; the New England and Middle States do better, but in general the returns on railroad stock are small. They are an incalculable benefit to the community, but in the vast majority of cases very much the reverse to the shareholders. The same thing may be said of Canadian lines."

THE three articles from *Broad Arrow*, of 20th March, in our issue to day entitled, respectively, "Imperial Movements," "The Russian Forces in Asia," and "Russian Policy in Central Asia," points to a speedy development of that policy which prompted the "Brussels Conference"—and will render it a matter of necessity on the part of Great Britain to look well to her armaments and military organization.

THE Hon. the Minister of Militia and Defence and Lady, have gone to Halifax for a few weeks. The Hon. Gentleman since his advent to the Government has been unremitting in his attention to the duties of his Department, and requires a little rest.

COL. PANET, Deputy of the Minister of Militia and Defence, has gone to Quebec, to make preliminary arrangements for the payment of the pensions voted by Parliament, to those entitled to receive them in that Province, who took part in the war of 1812-14.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Editor does not hold himself responsible for individual expressions of opinion in communications addressed to the VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

HALIFAX, June 5th, 1875.

To the Editor of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—I am glad to see in your valued paper of 1st inst., the remarks made by Scabbaranent Major Macdonald's appointment, to which he was justly entitled as a reward for his faithful services to the late Administration. Let it be borne in mind that Major Macdonald is the sole Nova Scotian appointed to the Militia Department in this District, from the D. A. G. down to the stoker and messenger of the Department, and it is very likely that if any change were made the appointment would be given to some foreigner or other person who has no stake in the country. Yours,

CEASE FIRING.