

the part of a prisoner who is, for the time being, in their hands? We do not wish to be misunderstood as casting the slightest reflection upon the individual detectives in this particular case. Rather would we commend the zeal and acuteness they displayed in the interests of justice, while acting in the line of what they no doubt believe to be duty. Nor do we wish to imply that it is not well and wise that provision should be made for the taking down for use in court of the confession of any prisoner accused of crime who may voluntarily desire to make such a statement. On the contrary, the very first question put by the court to the accused in all such cases is a solemn farce unless it is intended to open the door for a voluntary confession should the prisoner be disposed to make one. In fact, we are unable to fully understand why the court, or the prisoner's counsel, or the officers of justice standing near, should interpose to prevent such a confession being made by a plea of "Guilty," when the prisoner wishes to make that plea. There might even be a good deal to be said in favour of some provision whereby a prisoner who has expressed a wish to make such a confession beforehand should be given the opportunity to do so in the presence of some disinterested judicial officers appointed for the purpose. But it is quite another question whether the detective, whose duty it is to search for evidences of guilt, and whose reputation and personal interests are involved, is the proper person to hear and reproduce such confession. This question turns partly upon another. Is it fairly conceivable that a prisoner let us say a woman of highly nervous temperament, in the confusion and terror caused by arrest on so terrible an accusation, might be thrown into such a state that she would first make false statements in the attempt to explain what she might deem suspicious circumstances, and afterwards, confronted with proof of the falsity of such statements, in her confusion and despair, desperately resolve to cut short the period of suspense and torture by fabricating a confession? The question, in a word, resolves itself into one of the propriety of permitting the officer, whose personal and, if we may use the word for want of a better, professional interests are involved in securing a conviction, to take the place, first of a confessor, and afterwards of a witness in court?

On Monday evening last at the Massey Music Hall, Max O'Rell appeared—he does not lecture, he "appears"—before an audience of over three thousand, and discoursed in his original and characteristic way about the little foibles of John Bull, Sandy, and Pat. There is only one Max O'Rell. His lectures—we mean, appearances—have a distinction all their own. They are brilliant, full of wisdom and wit and fun. Though his style is so light and airy he never gives the impression of being frivolous or superficial. On the contrary, one is impressed by his thoughtfulness, his intellectuality, and the keenness of his insight and the breadth of his observation. Mark Twain somewhere remarks that the secret of humour lies in close observation. But Mark Twain "isn't in it" with Max O'Rell. Besides which, unlike the American humourist, the Frenchman is never guilty of exaggeration, nor does he ever violate good taste. His sense of the fitness of things is superb. But he has two gifts which give him a wholly unique position amongst speakers and writers of to-day. He can tell home truths not only without giving offence but with such irresistible good humour that those who are hardest hit laugh the merriest. The other gift is none the less remarkable: in a single witty remark, or even in one of his inimitable glances, he reveals a national characteristic which an ordinary writer or speaker would take many pages

or many minutes to express in a laboured essay or speech. We should, indeed, be sorry to think that Max O'Rell had visited Canada for the last time. In conversation with a representative of THE WEEK he spoke of a lecture on "Women" he might deliver here some day. It will be a genuine pleasure to see and hear him again.

The Prospects of Peace.

Japan appears to have at length succeeded in forcing China to humiliate herself by suing directly for peace. If the energy and persistence with which the former nation has pushed on the war, have placed her side by side with the most civilized powers of the West, so, too, does her determination to use her advantage to the utmost, leave her no whit behind even Germany, when she had her heel upon the neck of France. Should peace be concluded upon the terms now offered, or upon the still harder terms which will be insisted on later if these are rejected, and should the Chinese Empire be saved from the disintegration with which it will be threatened in consequence, one can but wonder whether its subsequent course will in any wise resemble that of the French Republic. That will depend upon the stuff of which the people are made. Should the humiliation of defeat be succeeded, as in the case of the French, by a fierce and unconquerable thirst for revenge, and should the people prove capable of a tithe of the same self-denial and persistence in preparing to take it, the immense superiority of China in population and natural resources should enable her in the course of a score or so of years to retaliate with terrible effect upon her comparatively slender antagonist. And yet, barring the question as to which was the aggressor in the first place, and assuming the war to have been justifiable on the part of the conqueror, Japan can hardly be blamed for having refused to listen to the proposals of any third parties so long as her adversary was unwilling to confess herself beaten, and ask directly for terms of peace.

President Cleveland's Message.

President Cleveland's Message to Congress must have been written this year under rather depressing conditions. It is, however, as usual, a strong and able document, a little laboured, perhaps, but containing much sound advice which the people's representatives would do well to heed. Without raising again the whole question of tariff reform, the President shows clearly that he still has the courage of his convictions. In advocating the abolition of the duties on coal, iron and sugar, and of the restrictions on the purchase and use of foreign-built ships, he urges reasons so clear and cogent that it is difficult to see how any thoughtful person can gainsay them. Nevertheless, such are the influences and exigencies of partyism, it is very doubtful whether either recommendation will be adopted. It may be doubted, in view of the severe criticisms which the issue of the recent gold loan has called forth, whether Mr. Cleveland's defence of that action will be accepted as satisfactory, though his argument, based on the absolute necessity of preserving the national credit from the possibility of suspicion or danger, will be hard to dispose of. The desirability of taking a leaf out of Canada's book for the improvement of their national banking system must sooner or later force some action upon Congress, though it is doubtful whether, under present conditions, any such action can be taken upon his recommendations during the present session. In fact, all the conditions seem to foreshadow a rather tame and unproductive session. To most nations a deficit of seventy millions of dollars on the