

Arabi Pasha, now an exile on the island of Ceylon, is said to be fretting himself into an early old age. Although but 49 years old, he is grey and thin and very much unlike the jovial fellow he was before he fell under British displeasure. No doubt Arabi's rising was as unjustifiable as Reil's, though decidedly of more respectable tone and proportions, but if the Egyptian leader was not considered deserving of death, it certainly seems that some clemency might be extended to him after eight years of a restraint and banishment which seems to have told so heavily upon his health and spirits.

The important question of tax exemptions seems likely to be brought to a solution in Ontario. Not only has Mr. Meredith the leader of the local opposition come out straightforwardly against them, but Mr. Mowat has issued a circular to all the municipal bodies of that Province, asking their views in regard to the abolition of exemptions. The result is, it is said, likely to be strongly in favor of the measure, so that it is far from unlikely that it may be passed at the next session of the Ontario Legislature. Should this come to pass it will form an important precedent which other Provinces will in all likelihood follow.

We need not believe every account that reaches us of the race difficulty in the Southern States—at least we must allow for exaggeration—but thick smoke is after all a sound indication of fire, or at least of smouldering and gathering incandescence. Some of the modes of treating the colored people in the south certainly do not seem calculated to assuage any exasperation that exists. This is the way in which the matter is handled at a place called Ashville, somewhere in the South. At the station there they erect a heavy wooden partition in a public room, if whites and blacks patronize it. The whites are allowed on one side of this wall, and the blacks on the other side. The railroads try to keep the blacks in cars by themselves. At the Knoxville station blacks are allowed only in the waiting room marked with a gilt sign, reading "Colored Waiting Room." If the blacks attempt to assert their rights as citizens of the United States they are forcibly restrained. These methods are evidently far from reassuring.

The era of strikes lately inaugurated in England, resulting in a considerable measure of success to the claims of the operatives, is, as was easily foreseen, bearing fruit, both sweet and sour—with a goodly proportion of the latter flavor. News comes from Brussels that the coal mine owners at Charleroi are unable to fulfill their contract with the government to supply 30,000 tons for the state. The stock in hand for use on the railways is nearly exhausted. Amicable overtures made to the strikers had no good result. Notices have been placarded at Mons, in which the miners insist upon an increase of 15 per cent. in wages, with the minimum of 88 cents per day for any day and recognition of the nine hours as a day's work. The striking miners at Charleroi are starving. A bread riot is threatened if shopkeepers refuse the men further credit. Governor Hainaut has advised the government to interfere. Such intelligence emphasises the necessity which is imperative on labor leagues to cultivate sound principles of justice, forbearance and moderation in their demands. In these requisites Mr. Powderly, who is a power, is not, we are glad to believe, deficient.

Another hoax of the Press—the European Press this time—has been perpetrated at the expense of the Czar. It is described as an "amusing hoax," but after all such sells are discreditable. It is referred to as a letter alleged to have been written by the present Czar prior to his accession to the throne, to the famous editor and panslavist leader, Aksakoff, whose widow died a few weeks ago. The document in question, which bears the date of May 22, 1886, contains bitter comments on the class of courtiers by whom the Imperial Family was surrounded, and compares the highest officers of state to contemptible lackeys. The publication of the letter in question has excited an immense amount of attention throughout Europe, and it appears to have been copied in almost every foreign newspaper of any importance. The whole thing is, however, but a hoax. The letter in question, instead of having been written by the present Emperor, was addressed in 1796 to Count Kotchoubey by the Grand Duke Alexander Paulowitch, who subsequently ascended the throne as Alexander I. The courtiers referred to in such bitter terms were the ignoble favorites of his grandmother, Catherine II. The original letter will be found in the first volume of the "Life and Times of Alexander I," published by C. Toyneville, in 1874.

The semi-barbarous state of the Hebrew Tribes in the times dealt with in the first books of the Bible has been partially assumed by many eminent students of biblical antiquity, and it has recently been pointed out that the translation into English familiar names of the proper names of many of those figuring in the Old Testament, such as the Dog, the Dove, the Hyena, the Lion's Whelp, the Strong Ass, the Adder, the Running Hind, etc., bring into immediate connection the English translation of Indian names, such as Big Bear, White Buffalo, Wolf, Red Cloud, Black Hawk, Fox, Crow and Turtle. Such Israelite names were probably of Gentile origin, that is, from the clan or gens, for the Israelites were surely Gentiles in the true sense, although later they abjured the charge. But individuals among them may also have adopted such names because they could be represented objectively. Such selection is made by some Indians apart from their totemic designation. Indians possess very few names that cannot be represented in pictographs; and the very large topic of tattooing is connected with this device antecedent to writing. The compilers of the Old Testament probably desired to break down a former practice, as is shown in Leviticus, xix., 28: "Ye shall not print any marks upon you." And there are other similar indications.

We draw attention to an article in our contribution column on the subject of school-books. We believe our contributor hits many weak spots both in the nature of the books, the sources of the supply, and the monopolies under which they are issued, all of which tell upon the pockets of the public, which is made to pay for inferior works. These are all important points, but the one which goes most against the grain is the fact that so many school manuals are American, and therefore contain nothing calculated to stimulate the patriotism of Canadian youth. We should not be sorry to publish from time to time some criticism of some of these manuals in more minute detail.

We have noticed in several of our contemporaries resumé of the year 1889—principal events, deaths of persons more or less noted, etc., and we have been struck with the prominence given to events and persons of the neighboring republic. In the obituary list we find numbers of persons whom not one Canadian in a thousand knows, cares about, or has the slightest interest in. It is much the same with news; as much attention is given to all sorts of American items, often of the silliest description, as if they were items of Canadian intelligence of real interest. Our taste may be bad, but we confess to great lack of appreciation of the greater part of American news, and could wish our papers more filled up with the doings of our own country.

A series of sermons by Dr. Talmage, purporting to have been written by that somewhat sensational divine from places in Palestine, connected with the gospel histories, has been recently published by several newspapers, by most of them probably in good faith. It is now, however, asserted that they are a fraud, in so far as, though really the productions of the Reverend Doctor, they are said to have been written long ago, while it is stated that he has written no such sermons during his present journey. If this be true, it is another instance of the untruthfulness and sensational shams which so discredit a portion of the Press, lower its dignity, impair the value of its functions, and destroy its reliability. To such a pass has this sort of thing come that scarcely any reader now receives a piece of intelligence as reliable, until further advices have brought confirmation or contradiction, often enough the latter.

Among the latest discoveries of buried literary treasures are those which have taken place at Tel el-Amarna, between Minich and Assiout on the eastern bank of the Nile. The mounds which covered this ancient capital have been made to yield up their secrets and their treasures. Among other things brought to light are the archives of Amenophis III., containing correspondence and despatches sent to that monarch and his father from officials and rulers in Palestine, and even in Assyria, at so remote a period as the fifteenth century before Christ.

The discoveries go to show that long before the exodus Canaan had its libraries and scribes, its schools and literary men. Its official documents prove that its inhabitants, whom the Israelites subdued and whose culture they inherited, were as literary as the inhabitants of Egypt or Babylonia. Exploration in Palestine is now earnestly urged by Professor Sayce. This, if carried out with any success, might throw much light on the question of how much of the ancient culture the Israelites may have assimilated at the time of the exodus and during that of the Judges. At present there is a good deal of evidence of savagery, but if it can be shown that the Hebrews had to any extent imbibed the Egyptian and Canaanitish culture, it might materially modify the tone of the prevailing biblical criticism, which is based on internal evidence, and partly on the assumption of the illiteracy of the Israelites of those times.

We are now beginning to know a little about the causes of the Brazilian Revolution. It is plain that the popular will, as we understand the phrase, had very little to do with it. No doubt there was a party which preferred a republic to an empire, but that feeling does not seem to have strongly influenced the masses of the people, and had certainly not arrived at any acute stage even among politicians. There is still less doubt that like other South American revolutions it was effected entirely by a military revolt. The throne was, indeed, weakened by other causes. The land-holders had been too suddenly despoiled, without compensation, of their property in slaves, and were consequently more or less alienated; a republican propaganda was probably stimulated and embittered by revolutionary foreigners, and there seems to have been a feeling that a certain order in the church was acquiring too great an influence under the shadow of the empire; but, without the initiative of the army, none of these causes, nor all combined, would have sufficed to shatter the monarchy and drive into exile a sovereign loved and revered by a very large proportion of the people. Whether anything better will, in anything like a near future, take the place of the empire is very doubtful. The Provisional Government is in no sense the creation of the people. The political horizon is by no means clear; and threats of refusal to come into the confederation are reported from some of the Provinces. It will not be till next September that the people will have it in their power to make their voice heard at the polls, and when the general election does take place it will be controlled by the army. A legislature created under such circumstances is likely to have but little weight or stability, being liable to be sent about their business by the power which will continue to dominate them. It may, of course, turn out differently, but present considerations leave it very doubtful whether the country would not have advanced far more surely, safely and steadily towards the fullest measure of political freedom under the enlightened and progressive guidance of the excellent and liberal sovereign deposed by little more than a mere clique craving for change and political power.